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ABSTRACT

This report is a case study of a federally-funded effort to implement comprehensive change in public education. Specifically, it examined the strategy of the Minneapolis public schools during the past five years to achieve this goal by creating a system of alternative schools, called Southeast Alternatives (SEA). Established as a separate administrative district of the Minneapolis public schools, SEA served as an experiment in decentralized administration, school-community participation in decision-making and parent/student choice among educational programs. The system of alternative schools included four separate school models at the elementary level: a free school, an open school, a continuous progress school, and a contemporary or traditional school. Selected options, based upon the elementary programs, were offered at the secondary level. SEA served approximately 2,500 students and each student had the choice of attending any of the alternative schools. This report focused upon the process through which SEA implemented a system of alternative schools. A description of the process of change was discussed in seven steps: diagnosis, initiation, definition, implementation, monitoring instructional environments, monitoring instruction efforts and stabilizing the program. The evaluation strategies included school-based ethnographies, development and yearly administration of objectives-based tests in reading and mathematics, an affective survey, observations of formal meetings, structured classroom observations, and extensive formal and informal interviews of school and community participants. (Author/JP)

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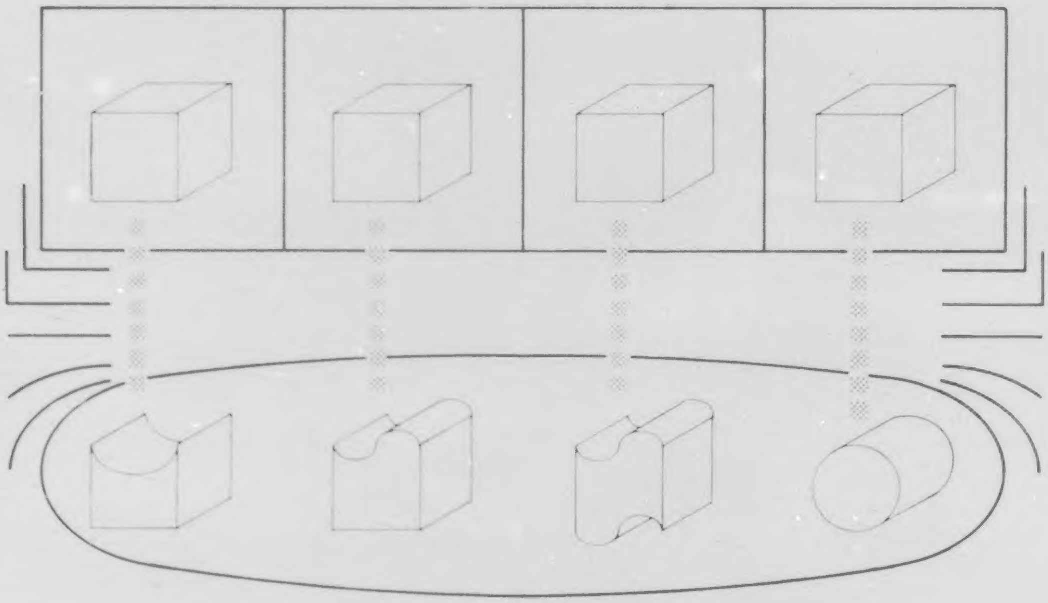
IMPLEMENTING ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

Lessons from the Minneapolis Experience



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This report is a case study of a federally funded effort to implement comprehensive change in public education, specifically, a system of alternative schools. The report has two purposes: (1) to examine the implementation of a locally defined approach to educational change and the extent to which expectations of the federal program were attained, and (2) to identify issues, concepts and strategies of relevance and utility to educators implementing educational change in general and alternative schools in particular. Evaluation strategies included school-based ethnographies, development and yearly administration of objectives-based tests in reading and mathematics, an affective survey, observations of formal meetings, structured classroom observations, and extensive formal and informal interviews of school and community participants. The report focuses upon the administration and organization of alternative schools, community and technical support systems, and differences among alternatives in instructional programs, and their effects on students. The report is organized by a model of the process of change derived from the setting and the literature on educational innovation.

(98 references)

PREFACE

This report is based on work done by the Minneapolis Evaluation Team of Educational Services Group, Incorporated. Under contract with the National Institute of Education, the Minneapolis Evaluation Team was responsible for the independent, external evaluation of the Experimental Schools Program in the Minneapolis Public Schools—Southeast Alternatives (SEA). The program was funded from 1971 to 1976 to bring about comprehensive change in the educational program of urban public schools; the external evaluation received concurrent funding.

This report has two purposes: (1) to report on the implementation of a locally defined approach to educational change and the extent to which expectations of the federal program were attained, and (2) to identify issues, concepts and strategies of relevance and utility to educators implementing educational change in general and alternative schools in particular.

The Minneapolis Evaluation Team was comprised of professional staff with backgrounds in anthropology, educational administration, psychology, sociology and public school teaching. Evaluation strategies included school-based ethnographies, development and yearly administration of objectives-based tests in reading and mathematics, similar development and administration of an affective survey of students, observations of formal meetings, structured classroom observations, and extensive formal and informal interviews of school and community participants of SEA. Early studies focused on the formal organization of SEA and its community and the development of an acceptable testing program. During the third year, the evaluation effort added school based ethnographies, followed by more focused studies during the final two years. Planning directly related to the final report began in July of 1974 under a new Project Director, Larry Reynolds. Major staff contributions during the last two years of the project were as follows:

School ethnographies:	Hal Nelson, Frank Giannotta, Ron French, Margot Jenkins Pendergraft, Judy Reynolds, Carol Winther, and Joan Ryba.
Organizational and Community Studies:	Doug Rider, Mary Mueller and Bruce Boraas.
Student Impact Studies:	Ron French, Karen Kane, Mike Crabill and Carol Allison.
Final Report:	Larry Reynolds, Frank Giannotta, Mike Crabill and Nickie Breaden.

The final report is drawn from earlier reports of the Minneapolis Evaluation Team, selected and written by the Director to provide an in-depth, descriptive case study of the implementation and operation of an alternative schools program in a public school setting. The report is organized in the following manner:

Chapter One examines alternative schools as a strategy of change, multiple definitions of alternative schools, components of alternative schools as defined by SEA, rationale for the overall evaluation strategy, and final report organization.

Chapter Two examines the factors facilitating the development of alternative schools and influencing their definition.

Chapter Three describes key features of both technical and community support involved in the implementation of alternative schools.

Chapter Four describes the learning environments of the alternative schools of SEA and the similarities and differences among them.

Chapter Five provides an analysis of the different alternatives in terms of achievement in basic skills, student affect and student perceptions of learning environments. It includes a study of the effects on students who changed from one alternative school to another.

Chapter Six describes the final phases of SEA under federal funding, particularly its reorganization within the Minneapolis Public Schools.

Chapter Seven provides a summary of the process of implementing alternative schools, conclusions about the role of external funding to facilitate educational change, and implications of alternative schools for the structure and functioning of public schools.

The work of the Minneapolis Evaluation Team was a requirement of the Experimental Schools Program and not a choice of the individual Experimental Schools Program sites. After early ambiguities and difficulties concerning the purposes and demands of the external evaluation effort, the staff of Southeast Alternatives and the Minneapolis Public Schools were most helpful. Particular appreciation is extended to Jim Kent, who served as Director of SEA from 1971 to 1975, and his successor Dave Roffers. We also wish to acknowledge the support of Norman Gold and Raymond Coward of the National Institute of Education. The support of Thel Kocher, director of the evaluation staff within SEA, greatly facilitated our work. Over the course of the project many other individuals provided counsel and insight regarding our efforts. While we cannot mention them all by name, their assistance is greatly appreciated. We are particularly pleased to have been associated with a project which was exciting, meaningful and challenging.

LJR

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The following report is a case study of a federally-funded effort to implement comprehensive change in public education. Specifically, it examines the strategy of the Minneapolis Public Schools to achieve this goal by creating a system of alternative schools, called Southeast Alternatives (SEA). Initially funded in 1971 by the U. S. Office of Education and later administered by the National Institute of Education, SEA received 6.5 million dollars over five years. Established as a separate administrative district of the Minneapolis Public Schools, SEA was to serve as an experiment in decentralized administration, school-community participation in decision-making and parent/student choice among educational programs.

The system of alternative schools included four separate school "models" at the elementary level—a free school, an open school, a continuous progress school, and a contemporary or traditional school. Selected options, based upon the elementary programs, were offered at the secondary level. Each school in SEA was an alternative in the sense of offering both a different learning environment and philosophy. SEA served approximately 2,500 students and each student had the choice of attending any of the alternative schools.

Southeast Alternatives also has been a highly visible program during the past five years. It has been considered by the National Institute of Education as the most successful of its Experimental Schools Program. Highly publicized, SEA has provided a setting where thousands of educators across the country could visit a variety of alternative schools operating within a public school setting. The visibility and success attributed to SEA, however, are potentially problematic. Education is notorious for its bandwagon approach to change and the alternative schools movement in education may be the latest in but a series of good ideas.

Educators frequently visit or read about innovative programs and prepare a shopping list of what they would like to see implemented in their own schools. The temptation increases as innovations are perceived as exciting or potentially enhancing the image of individual districts, schools or careers. In an effort to simplify local adoption, specific guidelines may be sought to acquaint local implementors with the behaviors appropriate in a new program. In short, the "good idea" becomes absolute. Consequently, what becomes disseminated by highly visible innovative programs are specific practices, not a knowledge of the process of change through which implementation was accomplished. Educators who fail to understand the reasons why an idea worked in one setting may find the new idea failing in their own. The research literature on educational change is dominated by perspectives of failure, resistance to change and unanticipated problems.

For these reasons, this report will focus upon the process through which SEA implemented a system of alternative schools. To organize our discussions, we will describe the process of change in seven steps—diagnosis, initiation, definition, implementation, monitoring instructional environments, monitoring instructional efforts and stabilizing the program. In this manner, we hope to achieve a dual purpose: (1) to report on the implementation of a locally-defined approach of public schools to educational change and the extent to which expectations of the federal program were attained, and (2) to identify issues, concepts and strategies of relevance and utility to educators implementing educational change in general and alternative school programs in particular. The audiences addressed by this report potentially include the staff of federal and state education agencies, school board members, central office and building administrators, professional support staff, teachers and parents.

In this introductory chapter we will examine (1) the use of alternative schools as a strategy of change; (2) the multiple meanings and connotations of alternative schools; (3) the essential components of alternative schools in SEA; (4) a rationale for our approach in reporting the SEA experience; and (5) the organization of the report.

Alternatives as a Strategy of Change

The public theme of Southeast Alternatives has been "educational choice" for parents, teachers and students. Choice is meaningful to the extent that there are alternatives from which to choose; that is, variability. Indeed, SEA has been characterized by variability--in instruction, governance, internal evaluation, staff development, community participation and resource allocation. Public schools as bureaucracies do not typically encourage variability nor do innovative programs. Indeed, the "innovation" of SEA may well be its tolerance for and management of variability.

Public schools have been characterized by a bureaucratic stance which seeks to reduce variability in educational programs. Centralized decisions promote a norm of equality or sameness (Lortie, 1969). This is accomplished by "equal piece of the pie" allocations of resources, usually on a per pupil basis among buildings. This promotes a rough equality in teacher/pupil ratios, professional support staff, and instructional materials among buildings serving the same age-grade groupings of students. Standardization is further encouraged by providing the same textbook at a given age-grade level to all students in a district and having the same instructional arrangements of teachers and students. Professional support staff are religiously "shared" among buildings. All of these actions place parameters on the amount of variability allowable among educational programs within a district. While the particular school attended by a given student is determined by his residence, the school's program can be favorably compared to others in terms of standardized, and highly visible, criteria. In essence, the school bureaucracy tries to minimize variability or, perhaps, to guard against it.

Within the parameters established by the school bureaucracy, however, there is frequently little agreement concerning educational programs. Public education is characterized by a multiplicity of goals and a lack of an instructional technology (Miles, 1965). There is a great diversity among adults (teachers and parents) in their perceptions of appropriate instructional priorities or instructional methods. Different priorities and approaches are as equally difficult to criticize as to defend. It is into this context that "innovations" are introduced.

Innovations are typically singular. The Experimental Schools Program has characterized past innovative programs as piecemeal change, limited in scope and effect. Usually limited to a single priority (increasing reading skills or developing an arts-centered curriculum), they usually advocate one approach as sacred--team teaching or teacher training to develop new skills. Further, the organization typically adopts a formal commitment to the innovation prior to its actual implementation. A problem frequently exists when there are differing perceptions among administrators, teachers and parents as to the need for the particular innovation. Indeed, innovative programs may devote considerable time during the implementation phase trying to convince participants of the need for a particular innovation (Reynolds, 1973). Frequently, the innovation is redefined to be consistent with previous programs and the innovation exists only as an organizational facade (Carlson, 1965; Smith and Keith, 1971; Charters et al., 1973).

As we will discuss, alternative schools provide the potential to address the existing variability among adults within the public school and to avoid specific innovations as a strategy of change. Variability was part of the context of change prior to SEA's initiation and it appears SEA has been successful in maximizing the potential of existing variability, rather than trying to control it. The concept of variability also was central to the organization and operation of SEA's instructional program and to the coordination of its many interdependent components, e.g., community involvement and technical support. While the implementation of alternative schools is the major theme of this report, variability is the minor theme.

Definitions of Alternative Schools

It is important to discuss the various meanings of "alternative schools" to clarify the nature of the program reported in this document. While Southeast Alternatives staff have been careful in their definitions, and sometimes adamant about what constitutes a "true" alternative schools program, the literature in education and the increasing number of "alternative" programs around the country have created a multiplicity of meanings and connotations for the term. Those who are interested in developing alternative schools will have to cope with the diverse use of the concept. Further, while SEA provides a case study where alternatives are defined, as we shall see, rather broadly, limited definitions of alternative schools may be appropriate and necessary in other settings. The development of alternative schools to the status of a nationwide movement suggests that this is so (Nyquist and Howes, 1972).

Historically, the term "alternative school" implied an alternative to the conventional public school program, frequently of a contemporary nature for a selected population of students as described by Duke:

> A compensatory alternative is designed for students who cannot or are not expected to succeed in regular public schools. These students suffer a plethora of labels such as disadvantaged, culturally deprived, emotionally disturbed, or remedial. There have been compensatory alternatives since the pauper schools of the nineteenth century, though certainly in less significant numbers (1974).

The Southeast Alternatives program was not compensatory. It was a total school program designed for all students, incorporating another component of definitions of alternative schools--the role of students and parents. A report of the League of Women Voters (1973) notes:

> As the term evolved it began to mean any situation in which a student could exercise choice. Thus, "alternatives" ranged in scope from choosing one hour per week of "enrichment" activities to choosing among total programs offering different learning environments.
>
> A current trend is to restrict the term "educational alternatives" to situations involving total program choice. Three characteristics that may be used to establish criteria for educational alternatives are expressed concisely in a recent New York State Education Department publication.
>
> First, there must be the element of choice... without...freedom of choice or entry, the program may only be a device for grouping. Second...the option must be more than a single class or only a part of the school day; it must represent an integrated total program. Third, any major option must have, in the main, a significantly different curriculum in which there has been considerable involvement of the parents and students in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of the program ("Providing Optional Learning Environments in New York State Schools," the State Education Department, Albany, N.Y., October 1973, pp.7-8).

As we shall see, these components were major features of Southeast Alternatives.

Alternatives have also been used to describe schools outside the public arena, i.e., "alternatives to public education." The Free School movement, with its focus on social reform and rejection of the programs and paraphernalia of public schools, is representative of his usage (Graubard, 1972). One of the unique features of SEA was the inclusion of a Free School within the public school structure.

The literature on alternative schools has also posited numerous shortcomings to "traditional schools" which provide a basis for definition by contrast. Tracing alternatives to the time of Benjamin Franklin, Morra (1974:1-3) notes that the "post 1960's alternatives make a clear break with traditional educational organization and practice, and share three basic assumptions...

> 1. Children are naturally curious and are motivated to learn by their own interests and desires...
> 2. The most important condition for nurturing the natural interest and curiosity of the child is a corps of adults who can enrich the environment and offer sympathetic help on a frequent basis...
> 3. The best setting for learning is a community in which all participants to the educative process have a voice in the formulation of school policy."

Southeast Alternatives also included a Contemporary School which constantly fought being called the "traditional school" and thereby being attributed automatically with the "worst" of public school programs. On the other hand, from the perspective of numerous persons, the "best" of public school programs is the traditional school. A recent trend has been to establish traditional schools as the alternative. Discontent with schools that are too liberal, lack discipline and fail to teach basic skills has created a movement and philosophy of its own. As we shall see, the issue of the "best" alternative is emotional, but controllable.

Alternatives have also been defined in terms of substantive differences in curriculum and instructional methods. After surveying alternatives in both New York State and across the country, Duke (1974) saw the following as distinguishing pedagogical characteristics of alternatives:

1. A wide range of individual options including what, when, where, and how to learn.
2. Increased emphasis on affective development.
3. Multiple-staffing involving teacher aides, assistants, volunteers, parents, resource people, etc.
4. Some attempt to group students of different ages, abilities, and/or home backgrounds.
5. Nontraditional facilities ranging from old homes to schools without walls.
6. Wide use of learning environments outside the school.
7. More individually-based, as opposed to normative, evaluation.
8. A general climate of warmth, informality, and cooperation.

The instructional programs of Southeast Alternatives incorporated all of these pedagogical characteristics.

The attempts to define alternatives have been extensive, frequently value-laden and usually general and abstract. In its broadest sense, an "alternative" can be anything different than what exists. The definitions, however, are helpful to point out the many facets of alternatives as they existed in Southeast and how the theme of alternative schools could provide the basis for comprehensive change in the educational program of public schools (a goal of the federally-funded program).

Major Components of SEA

While we wish to save a specific definition of Southeast Alternatives until we discuss the process of local definitions of change (Chapter Two), it may be helpful to the reader to state the major components of alternative schools in SEA.

1. Alternatives were designed to serve all students across the entire educational program within the public school setting.
2. Alternatives were building-wide programs at the elementary level (K-6), with parallel programs at the secondary level.
3. Attendance in any program was determined by choice of students and parents.
4. Alternatives also included formal governance groups to facilitate increased community and staff involvement in school-related decisions, e.g., the design and coordination of the alternatives program.
5. All elementary programs were to provide quality programs in basic skills.
6. Technical support was provided by professional staff in a variety of areas, e.g., inservice, curriculum, and evaluation.
7. Specifics of each alternatives program were the responsibility of individuals involved in each building and program.
8. It was not a program to find the "best" alternative; it was assumed different students function better in different school environments.
9. The program served a population of over 2,000 students.
10. The program received 6.5 million dollars of financial support over five years.
11. Extensive monitoring was required by the federal program.
12. Program definition was influenced by requirements of the federal program.
13. Program definition was influenced by the context of the Minneapolis Public Schools and the Southeast Community.

The Southeast Alternatives program was extensive and expensive; a major effort to change the structure and functioning of public schools within the context of a large-scale federal program of educational change. The external evaluation effort was also extensive, also locally defined. At the risk of divergence, we would like to discuss our approach to the evaluation of this program. In this manner, we can set the parameters and expectations for the context of the report; the reader may judge the appropriateness and utility of what follows.

Specific Purposes of the Report

While the remainder of this report is about SEA, this section is really about the external evaluation team. Our priorities, decisions and values will become apparent as we try to describe why the final report on SEA has taken its particular form.

The evaluation team has, over time, been subject to many influences. We have been expected to provide valuable information to federal policy makers and program monitors, applied research communities, local program participants, the field of evaluation and educators across the country. In sum, all things to all people. We have been expected, on one hand, to apply the best tenets of existing research and evaluation strategies and, on the other, be innovative and creative. The evaluation team, the Experimental Schools Program and Southeast Alternatives have changed personnel, programs and focal concerns over five years.

No current member of the evaluation team was present "at the creation" of SEA. The priorities and problems of public education have shifted from 1971 to 1976. Consultants have been advised, panels convened, site reviews completed, and policies reversed. It has been interesting.

This final report is the product, however, of several fairly stable concerns and issues. We will briefly discuss what we have tried to accomplish, and in a few instances, tried to avoid.

First, we have been intrigued by the apparent success of SEA in attaining the general purposes of the federal program. SEA has been a success in terms of its intent as stated in early proposals. The main purpose of SEA was to offer educational options within the public school setting (MPS, 1971). This has been accomplished in terms of alternative instructional programs and patterns of community involvement associated with each alternative school (Nelson, Giannotta and Pendergraft, 1975; Rider, 1975). SEA has been a success in serving as an experiment. Instructional alternatives at the building-wide level, designed to serve all students across the entire educational program within the public school structure, are not common. The instructional, financial, administrative and logistical issues associated with a program at this level of implementation were not totally known prior to SEA (Morra, 1974). SEA's experience with a number of instructional, financial, administrative and logistical structures and activities has allowed it to serve as a source of ideas for future alternative school programs. Model seeking appears to be a dominant interest of the visitors to SEA; model dissemination is a primary concern of its participants. SEA has been a success in terms of comprehensive change. SEA has been important in that it has moved attempts at innovation "beyond achievement." In the past, many change attempts have focused upon student achievement as if this were the only aspect of schooling requiring change. SEA, in contrast, has sought to change the basic structure and functioning of public schools--parent and student choice of school, decentralized decision making, school-community governance, staffing patterns and instructional priorities. While this report is not organized to provide evidence for the successes and failures of SEA, we have been intrigued by these perspectives.

It is significant that SEA experienced many of the problems of change attributed as causes of a failure to change in other settings. The literature provides a long listing. To name but a few, these include abstract goals, differing interpretations of appropriate behavior, conflict, excessive time and energy demands, fatigue and low morale, inefficiency in group decision making, inappropriate skills and bureaucratic constraints (Smith and Keith, 1971; Gross, Giaquinta and Bernstein, 1971; Charters and Pellegrin, 1973; Pincus, 1974; Baldridge and Deal, 1975). As Packard (1973) notes, however, the problems of organizational change seem to be the problems of organizations in general, whether undergoing change or not. If so, the lengthy listing seems to offer little insight into what was unique about SEA, or what should be considered by educators judging the potential for change in their own settings and by funding agencies seeking to maximize the probability of change.

SEA provided a potential opportunity to talk about "what works" in contrast to the research literature on failure to change and what to avoid. Our concern went beyond the description of a particular instance to the search for more general insights applicable to various change programs and school settings. The assumption was made that the Minneapolis Public Schools and the programs and staff of SEA shared a number of characteristics common to other schools, professional educators and communities.

Second, we have been concerned with two components of the Experimental Schools Program as a strategy for change; the concept of "comprehensive change" and local definitions of change.

The Experimental Schools Program was created because of a concern about the failure of federal monies and programs to significantly change public schools. The extensive funding over five years was to provide the necessary time and resources to allow districts to implement "comprehensive change." While the concept of comprehensive change has been a messy one to define, it implies a basic change in the structure and functioning of public schools. SEA provided a setting for an intensive study of whether alternative schools could accomplish that goal.

The Experimental Schools Program emphasized local definitions of ways to achieve comprehensive change. (Other sites did not follow an alternative schools design.) We were therefore interested in identifying the factors which led to the adoption of alternative schools in general as well as their specific programs. Further, the "transportability" of SEA's program was of concern, heightened by the extensive information dissemination efforts of SEA. The volume of printed materials mailed across the country and number of visitors to SEA was impressive.

Third, we have actively sought input from educators visiting SEA to define the focus of our final report. This was accomplished by listening to questions and concerns voiced during national conferences (e.g., sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa and the University of Connecticut) and information-sharing sessions sponsored by SEA for Minneapolis Public School staff.

Major questions have been: "How do we implement alternative schools? How much do they cost? What kinds of alternatives are there? How do you 'involve' the community? How do you 'get' teachers to change?"

We have therefore tried to provide a fairly extensive descriptive account of SEA to allow the reader a sense of "what SEA was like." In this manner, the reader could get a general notion of the components of an alternative schools system and a strategy of change. The description would provide the concrete knowledge to support our discussions of more general concepts, issues and strategies.

Fourth, we have been interested in the technical support provided in SEA to facilitate the implementation and development of alternative school programs. This interest stems in part from general concerns about the process of change. While new programs are designed to ultimately improve instruction for students, for adults who are to implement those programs, the immediate effect is disruptive.

> Frequently individuals must acquire new knowledge, alter their belief systems, and modify customary patterns of behavior. The amount of time necessary for these changes to occur depends upon factors associated with the innovation, the situation, and the innovators. During the period of disruption, new situations are encountered and experience is less relevant as a guide. The predictability of behavior is decreased and planning is less effective (Reynolds, 1971).

SEA devoted considerable financial resources to the provision of technical support during the early phases of implementation.

Our interest in community support of alternative schools also led to a focus upon formalized support functions. The community was involved as recipients and providers of information, as volunteers in instructional support roles and as staff members of support services.

Fifth, we have been sensitive to the priorities of local program participants and emerging trends in evaluation. The growth of alternative schools in American education has been accompanied by a variety of research needs and problems, calling for alternative models of educational research and assessment. A central need has been expressed in demands of some educators for the development of new ways of conceptualizing educational accountability. This demand has recently been formulated by an SEA participant as follows:

> Accountability means being held responsible for something over which one has control. Schools must be accountable for those things for which they have responsibility and legitimate control. Schools are responsible for the environments which they create and foster for children...They can and they must be held accountable for understanding the reasons for and the effects of structuring the environment in ways that they choose.
>
> There is much in a child's life over which schools have no control...which affect the child's ability and motivation to learn (Aldrich, 1974).

A related need has been a move towards switching the major focus of evaluation away from the child and towards the school environment (Duke,1974). Children's responses to an environment, given the rationale of accountability outlined above, may become secondary, though still important, to the task of assessing the school environment itself. The report, therefore, includes an emphasis on describing, comparing and contrasting the various instructional programs.

Sixth, we have been attentive to evaluation's purpose of passing judgment. We have already alluded to the success of SEA and several statements qualifying that success. We have been interested in determining if SEA accomplished what it proposed. Were the alternatives "really" different? What were the effects of different programs on students? Did the community take advantage of the opportunity to attend a non-neighborhood school? Will SEA survive after the federal money goes away? Did SEA have an impact on the Minneapolis Public Schools? These evaluation questions are also addressed throughout the report.

Seventh, we have tried to avoid the production of a "typical research report." To this end we have omitted from the body of this report a description of the Experimental Schools Program (see Appendix A) and a review of the research and evaluation literature on alternative schools (see Appendix B). We have avoided extensive methodological statements on field studies, participant observation, instrument development, interview strategies and data analyses. These may be found in the pertinent reports referred to in our discussions.

Organization of the Report

In light of the above discussion, this report will focus upon the following:

1. Factors underlying the definition of alternative schools in SEA and the identification of factors which may serve as a guide for definitions of alternative schools in other settings (Chapter Two).
2. Key features of both technical and community support involved in the implementation of alternative schools (Chapter Three).
3. A description of the alternative learning environments of SEA and an analysis of several dimensions on which they differed (Chapter Four).
4. An analysis of the effects of the different elementary alternatives in terms of achievement in basic skills, student affect, student perceptions of learning environments and students who changed from one alternative to another (Chapter Five).
5. Description of the final phases of SEA under federal funding and the local factors influencing its future definitions of an alternative schools program (Chapter Six).
6. Conclusions about the role of external funding to facilitate educational change, implications of alternative schools for the structure and functioning of public education, and a summary of a process for implementing alternative schools derived from the preceding discussions (Chapter Seven).

The chapters outlined above are intended to provide both descriptive narrative about SEA and more general issues, concepts and strategies in the implementation of alternative schools. To attain these goals, we have adopted a descriptive model of implementing alternative schools. The model has been derived from the general literature on educational change and not from the SEA experience per se. We consider its value as providing a means to organize a larger amount of concrete information into more general categories. Hopefully, readers also will find it helpful in organizing their thoughts about alternative schools in their own setting.

The model will consist of seven components, each keyed to the discussions of selected chapters. They are as follows:

1. Diagnosis—refers to the assessment of the existing priorities and concerns of the community, school district and building personnel as well as the financial, technical, professional and interpersonal resources available for change efforts (Chapter Two).
2. Initiation—focuses upon the impetus for change and the involvement and commitment of people prior to beginning efforts of definition (Chapter Two).
3. Definition—includes the setting of overall goals of a new program and the deciding who will determine specific programs and activities to attain those goals (Chapter Two).
4. Implementation—refers here to the organization and procedures whereby technical and community support are mobilized to assist in the conversion from a previous program to the development of a new program (Chapter Three).
5. Monitoring instructional environments—calls for procedures of assessing the extent to which actual behaviors are congruent with overall program goals. Without the inclusion of this step, the relevance of the next is virtually left to chance (Chapter Four).
6. Monitoring instructional effects—calls for procedures of assessing the consequences of various alternative instructional goals. While student achievement is an obvious example, this report will also examine other options in this area (Chapter Five).
7. Stabilizing the program—addresses issues concerned with maintaining innovative programs after they have lost their initial excitement and supportive funding. Changes in the context of the change effort may well occur, calling for continued diagnosis and a repetition of the other steps to allow adaptations, refinements, or as in the case of SEA, survival (Chapter Six).

Our format throughout the report will be to describe SEA and then derive implications for the implementation of alternative schools in other settings. The model will be used to summarize these implications into a series of seven steps. In the final chapter, we will summarize the entire model for implementing alternative schools.

CHAPTER TWO

PROGRAM CONCEPTUALIZATION

In this chapter we will examine the community and school setting of Southeast Alternatives (SEA), the process through which a proposal was written and submitted to the National Institute of Education (NIE) to create SEA, and the early goals defining the overall project and each alternative school program. These three areas of discussion correspond to the first three phases of the model of change: diagnosis, initiation and definition. A summary of the key variables in the diagnosis, initiation and definition of change in SEA is then presented.

Program Setting: Diagnosing the Context of Change

Both Minneapolis and Southeast Minneapolis, as a city and community respectively, influenced the character and design of SEA. This section summarizes some important features of each setting and their relevance to the project's initial planning and design.

Minneapolis as an Urban Educational Setting

Minneapolis was selected by NIE as an urban Experimental Schools Program (ESP) site. Though certainly a city by commonly accepted yardsticks (e.g., geographic size, demographic composition, and legislative mandates), it was by no means a complex metropolis on the scale of New York. Nor were the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) an "innter city" system of schools such as found in Philadelphia or Washington, D.C. Considerations of three aspects of the MPS/SEA picture in 1970—school population, ethnic composition, and system size—clarify these observations.

In the 1970-71 school year, the MPS system enrolled a total of 66,934 students. The total population of Hennepin County, which encompassed the city of Minneapolis, was then 960,000. Neighboring Ramsey County, encompassing St. Paul, had a population of some 480,000. French and Reynolds (1973) analyzed 1970 racial distributions across several areas in the Twin Cities. These areas consisted of St. Paul, Minneapolis minus Southeast, Southeast, and the attendance areas of the neighborhood schools in SEA. They concluded:

> The racial composition of the Twin Cities is not exactly a coat of many colors. None of the areas considered contained even 10% minorities; there is a small black population and a very small population of Indians (1973:7).

The racial composition of Southeast was 95% White. French and Reynolds also found that unlike Minneapolis and St. Paul, "Southeast contains a small percentage of what is classified as other specified races" and "a large proportion of this group undoubtedly are orientals" (1973:7). In 1970, "other unspecified" still represented only 2% of the 26,000 people residing in Southeast. Southeast's demographic composition was heavily a function of its proximity to the University of Minnesota's main campus.

In light of the above profile, it is not surprising to find MPS reporting a 1970 figure of 13.04 for the total percentage of minority students enrolled city-wide in the system. Southeast schools reported a slightly lower figure of 10.5% total enrolled minorities for the 1970-71 school year (MPS, 1971:39). In 1971, an event occurred which held implications for the operation of the SEA project. A class action lawsuit was filed against MPS which changed, over several years, policies conducive to unlawful racial segregation. On May 24, 1972, the U.S. 5th District Court concurred with an MPS Board approved school desegregation plan. The MPS system was required to submit progress reports to the court every six months.

The plan followed several years of MPS activities aimed at realizing racial desegregation in the city's schools. The plan sought to maximize the racial balance of both staff and students and included curriculum development and teacher-training activities. Elementary schools were involved through initiation of a "clustering" concept. Clustering entailed expansion of certain elementary attendance areas for desegregation/integration purposes. The city-wide plan was designed to avoid placing the onus of movement solely upon minorities. A centralized Department of Intergroup Education was established under the direction of an Assistant Superintendent. A formula consisting of enrollment percentages (or "bands") for majority and minority racial balance was devised. Transfers across schools were processed through Intergroup Education within the guidelines of the city-wide plan.

As part of MPS, SEA was required also to function within the guidelines of the desegregation plan. In addition to MPS human relations sessions required for staff development, student movement formed a primary area of impact. Families residing within the boundaries of the SEA project continued to be able to initiate transfers among SEA schools at any time. Families (both majority and minotiry) residing outside of SEA could also seek participation in the project under a city-wide Open Enrollment Program for SEA schools initiated in April 1972. Open enrollment families were permitted to initiate transfers into SEA, provided such transfers would not negatively affect the racial balance (as set by the city plan) of either sending or receiving schools or negatively influence the receiving school's rated building capacity (i.e., causing overcrowding).

What did the plan mean for SEA's future? First, it set parameters on the extent to which the alternatives could draw students from non-SEA attendance areas if this would negatively affect the racial balance of non-SEA schools, particularly during the period when city-wide alternatives did not exist. Second, for SEA as a system of choice, it meant that majority and minority enrollment figures would represent families who chose to attend each alternative. There were questions about the extent to which minorities would choose equally among the existing alternatives. In contrast to some urban alternatives, SEA had not been designated as a "compensatory" educational program. Rather it was intended as a public system of options which would serve both minority and majority students, low and middle income clients. It did house, however, some program components of a compensatory nature. These were either formally designated as such (e.g., the MPS "special education" program and accompanying staff at the various alternatives) or functioned in essence as such (e.g., some alternatives' attracting groups of former "drop or push-outs").

Although Minneapolis faced a problem (racial desegregation) similar to those of larger cities, in terms of numbers, the problem was hardly on the same scale. The city's relatively small minority population facilitated dealing with this still formidable challenge. Similarly, size proved a key factor in the design and administration of SEA. For example, midpoint in the project (1973-74), SEA formed the smallest of the city's four administrative areas. During that year, the MPS district encompassed over 100 school buildings and some 2,800 teachers, serving a total student population of some 59,000 (down from 66,934 in 1970-71). SEA consisted of six buildings with less than 2,500 students—relatively miniscule in comparison to enrollments in each of the city's three other areas.

SEA's size was an advantage in some respects. Its schools were located within reasonable distances of one another. Interaction among SEA participants was highly personalized. Manageability was generally enhanced. The area happened to be relatively close to the central downtown MPS office as well. It was not uncommon for SEA staff to mention colleagues working in other parts of the city, reinforcing the city's rather town-like atmosphere.

In some respects, however, small size was a distinct disadvantage for SEA. Minneapolis, again as other cities, was experiencing declining enrollments. From the project's earliest days, it was made clear to SEA that eventual merger with one of the larger three administrative areas would be necessary. SEA's buildings were among the oldest in the city, thus adding to the economic constraints of remaining semiautonomous. The end of SEA's third year (1973-74) was set as a tentative target for the completion of administrative merger, although it did not actually occur until the beginning of the fifth year. (We will discuss this issue in greater depth in Chapter Six.)

Southeast as an ESP Setting

We have highlighted key points concerning Southeast Minneapolis as an urban educational setting. It was relatively small in terms of school population and geographic size; it was predominantly White; it was a "university community." Our purpose here is to mention additional aspects of Southeast which relate specifically to the dynamics of pre-ESP educational change.

Our description of Southeast as a relatively small "university community," though technically accurate, requires qualification since it is easily misleading. For example, it masks the considerable internal diversity which also characterized the community. This diversity could be found in residents' incomes, occupations, life-styles, and philosophies (including educational preferences), as well as the physical appearance of the Southeast area. Residential districts intersected light industry and commercial areas. French and Reynolds (1973) provide an excellent treatment of demographic variation within Southeast. The reader is referred to their work for additional details on such variables as age, racial composition, family structure, occupations, residence patterns and education.

Southeast also had a substantial pre-ESP history of involvement in education through the local university. One way to conceptualize the decade immediately preceding the project is to regard SEA's local schools as a system in "moving equilibrium" (Wallace, 1961). These schools, as part of the larger

MPS bureaucracy, formed an open sociocultural system which changed primarily through exchanging inputs and outputs with their larger environment. A critical piece of that larger environment was the local university with a good deal of the "inputs" into Southeast schools arriving as educational "innovations" in the form of staff training, student teachers, university professors, and researchers.

The effect of the university setting certainly cannot be ignored. In fact, prior to any word of ESP, all of the SEA elementary schools had been used as local "demonstration sites" by the university. A continuous progress program had already been instituted at the future "continuous progress" alternative. The SEA high school represented a recent merger between the local SEA high school and the university's high school. Yet, the dominating character of the types of changes mentioned was their "piecemeal" nature, scattered across the various schools in segmented programs, activities, and timing in appearances.

During the years immediately preceding the SEA project, small groups of parents and staff of the Southeast community had begun to demand greater client input into shaping the education provided by MPS schools. Piecemeal change strategies had proven unsatisfactorily to these members of the community. However, in terms of both preferences and organization, such groups were far too fragmented to be a serious threat to the local board. Their strategies of change and reactions to MPS also mirrored considerable variation. For example, some opted out of the public system entirely, sending their children to small private alternatives. A number of these were then operating across the city. Others preferred to continue advocating for change by working "through the system." Prior to SEA, one such group had obtained a commitment from MPS for an open classroom. However, system-wide change prospects looked bleak, particularly in terms of an ability to address the highly varied educational demands of a highly varied Southeast community. For example, many SEA residents seemed content with a "mainstream" model of formal schooling--e.g., an emphasis on the three R's and self-contained classrooms. Others, as we saw, were seemingly split among radical change advocates and reformers. Still others seemed content with the "ungraded" school recently initiated in Southeast.

Community advocacy in Southeast prior to ESP was not limited to education. Citizen activism was a hallmark of Minneapolis in general. In Southeast, as in other areas of the city, "community involvement" was partially manifested in a formidable array of voluntary resident associations. These played local input and watchdogging roles in contacts with varieties of governmental organizations. For example, the Southeast Minneapolis Planning and Coordinating Commission (SEMPAC) formed a central umbrella organization for several Southeast district-level community associations.

SEMPAC also maintained a Schools Committee, which included representatives of these district-level groups. As a university community, Southeast contained a rich resource of parents who were professionals, including credentialed educators. Further varieties of informal resident networks brought some of these professionals into continuing contact (often as role occupants) with Southeast voluntary associations. Southeast's informal networks of parents and voluntary associations had, in turn, come into contact with the formal organization of MPS schools.

Program Initiation

The impetus for change in SEA stemmed in part from the interest and involvement of citizens in Southeast and the relationships with the local university. Change had also been initiated from the top, i.e., the superintendent's office of the Minneapolis Public Schools. The Experimental Schools Program was an opportunity for change supported by all parties.

The U. S. Office of Education announced the Experimental Schools Project in December, 1970. A letter of interest from the MPS Superintendent, in which a rough outline of the SEA project's early stages was sketched, was submitted January 28, 1971. Shortly thereafter, and prior to award of its planning grant, the formal MPS organization in Southeast solicited input from a core group of Southeast parents, which included current and former chairpersons of SEMPAC's School Committee. By the time the planning grant was formally awarded in early February, an informal preliminary planning group of local school technocrats and concerned parents had been formed.

Among those further recruited to assist in proposal writing was the future director of the SEA project, who was excused from his duties as director of the high school in Southeast to devote full time to writing. The high school's assistant principal, who had made preliminary contacts with the first small group of parents, was also involved in the writing and eventually became principal of one of the alternatives. The core writing group divided up coordination and linkage responsibilities: some took drafts for input, reactions, further writing, editing, etc., to the future site of the open alternatives; others assumed responsibility for the future contemporary and continuous progress constituencies. In all, approximately thirty administrators, teachers, parents and students constituted the writing task force. However, with reactors at each site over the two month period also included, the number involved far exceeded the task force.

Moreover, representatives on the task force mirrored a cross-section of what would eventually constitute each of SEA's organizational components: MPS central administration; teachers and administrators from the proposed alternatives; people who would be involved in the alternatives community/school governance or advisory groups; individuals who would staff the project's formative evaluation component, K-12 student support services, budgetary and transportation sections, public information office, staff development center, and its community education department. Some representatives were parent activists who would later assume formal roles in a number of these organizational components; others were MPS staff who would continue representing MPS service functions or occupy a newly constituted SEA organizational niche. In short, SEA planners heavily included those who would be SEA implementors. Further, choice was extended to future SEA staff as well as families. During the summer preceding the project's initiation, staff were requested to indicate their preference for assignment either among the proposed SEA alternatives or outside the project. Necessary realignment and transfers were made. Thus, key SEA participants developed a critical sense of ownership.

In one sense, the MPS formal organization solicited variation in and among early planners. In another sense, it wisely capitalized upon preexisting variation. For example, it solicited diverse input quite early, expanding the process of solicitation with the award of the planning grant. In terms of both designed alternatives and staffing, however, it was able to build upon pre-existing variation. The notions of alternatives and choice dovetailed perfectly. For those who favored a mainstream option, the contemporary school was offered. The continuous progress school formed a logical site for an ungraded option. Both of these proposed options already existed. Two additional ones were designed to develop "from scratch"--the open and free school alternatives. Yet, even here, the open alternative would be located at a pre-existing school. Only the free school option would require creation in terms of a staff and site. The junior/senior high school would serve as a logical receiver and K-12 extension of elementary options. "Real" constituencies existed for each of the above options. Thus, SEA was designed to accommodate a spectrum of desires ranging from extreme departure from the past to rather close adherence to pre-SEA offerings.

Announcement of ESP funding in early May 1971 triggered an emotional rise in expectations among many participants. As noted, members of the core advocate groups (both staff and parents) were hired in formal organizational roles. Others volunteered services, later being similarly absorbed. Within some components of the project, a type of cultural revitalization movement was launched, with funding and experimental status serving legitimating functions (Giannotta, 1975a). This phenomenon resembled in some ways the "big bang" approach to innovation, or what the NIE/ESP had sought (with itself as the catalyst) in terms of system-wide impact and called "comprehensive change."

Program Definition

Southeast Alternatives was funded by the Experimental Schools Program in response to the overall goals of the proposed program. While program organization, logistics and components were yet to be defined (and would be changed repeatedly over the five years of the project), they reflected a number of formal intents that remained essentially constant.

A key intent was the provision of choice among alternative schools to parents, students and staff. SEA sought to offer a range of elementary and secondary programs based upon differing educational philosophies. Elementary options included a (K-6) Open School, a (K-6) Contemporary School, a (K-6) Continuous Progress School, and a (K-12) Free School. SEA families chose among these four alternatives and could initiate transfers among them at any time. School choice was thus extended beyond the traditional pre-SEA criterion of residence in an immediate "attendance area" designated by the local school district.

A related intent was the provision of K-12 continuity in learning programs, a provision of the Experimental Schools Program. Project design sought to operationalize this goal through structural modifications in secondary level programs. SEA's secondary level options consisted of the K-12 Free School mentioned above and a (7-12) junior/senior high school. The (7-8) junior high school offered a number of "transitional programs" which built upon or extended types of programs offered in the project's elementary alternatives. Transitional programs at the (7-12) high school included 7-9 (eventually extended to include sixth grades) open and nongraded programs, as well as a mainstream junior high program. In the fourth year of SEA, a 9-12 open program was also planned for implementation the following year.

A third intent concerned the MPS/SEA understanding of comprehensive change, which was defined in various ways over the course of the project. These definitions, however, repeatedly emphasized promising practices instituted concurrently in both school building programs and organizational support services. To briefly illustrate: comprehensive means "the products or results of implementing a combination of promising practices in concert. The provision of sufficient educational options so that all learners could meet with success in programs of their choice" (MPS, 1973). From a listing of SEA goals cited by SEA in 1975: "One project will test comprehensive change over a five year period...combining promising school practices in a mutually reinforcing design. Curriculum, staff training, administration, teaching models, internal research, and governance in SEA make up the main mutually reinforcing parts."

Still another formal intent dealt with decentralized decision-making. SEA would "test decentralized governance" and this test would entail experiments in the transfer of decision-making powers traditionally lodged with both the MPS Board of Education and central administration. Both the SEA formal organization as well as each school were expected to develop models of shared decision-making incorporating staff, students, and parents in a workable partnership. "Some" transfer of formal power and authority was expected to occur in SEA during the project's experiments in pluralistic decision-making. Principal thrusts of the decentralization intent were: (1) bridging traditional boundaries between clients and professionals in a public education delivery system and (2) giving all participants in SEA as comfortable a sense as possible of participation and control.

A fourth major intent concerned basic skills. SEA committed each alternative to providing students with a curriculum which fostered basic skills mastery (e.g., language arts, mathematics). SEA also committed each alternative to operationalizing this intent in its individual fashions.

Each alternative was additionally committed to furnishing instructional and learning environments which went beyond basic skills--that is, furnishing programs that addressed multiple goals. These goals included, but were far from limited to, areas such as student affect; use of the community as a learning laboratory; introduction of multiple learning options within each building (e.g., pottery, industrial arts, creative dramatics, etc.); and modifications in students' use of time, space, materials and contacts with adults.

While the definition of community participation and technical support components will be given in Chapter Three, an overview of the program definition of each alternative school in SEA is presented now to demonstrate the variability which existed under the umbrella of "alternative schools." These definitions include a formal statement of each program as well as our own perspectives (e.g., cultural assumptions underlying each program) and conclusions.

Each of the alternative schools under the SEA project was to develop its own distinctive formal charter or philosophy which would lay out the learning system to be followed. This "formal doctrine" was to result in significant differences between the schools, and between them and other, non-alternative schools.

The program goals of the Contemporary School were operational rather than doctrinal:

> The majority of the student's day is spent in self-contained, teacher-directed classrooms. Interest centers in the areas of mathematics, science, music, ceramics, media and industrial arts are used by students when time is available. The Tuttle Community School...offers students options in after-school courses in pottery, woodworking, foreign language study, and recreational activities (SEA, 1973:1-5).

The Contemporary recipe emphasizes: (1) teacher-directed classroom education; (2) a "cradle-to-grave" community service orientation through provision of baby-sitting for school events, extended day care for school-aged children (Latch Key), an after-school program, adult education and a senior citizens' program; (3) coupled with a rigorous emphasis on basic skills, a strong emphasis on career education, manual dexterity, recreation, and learning for life (safety, drug education, death education, etc.). Some important cultural assumptions are: (1) there is a corpus of knowledge that should be learned at certain times in a person's life; (2) this corpus can be successfully taught in blocks, called "subjects"; (3) frequent monitoring helps keep learning on pace; (4) time and work are closely interrelated, so that a set amount of work should be accomplished in a given time span.

The Continuous Progress School is committed to the concept from which its name derives:

> Continuous Progress...is based on the assumption that no two learners are exactly alike, and the best way to facilitate learning is to gear activities to the individual learner. Grade barriers as arbitrary reflections of chronological age are eliminated and competence is the basis for movement (French and Reynolds, 1975:28).

Like Contemporary, Continuous Progress strongly emphasizes basic skills, the two major curriculum thrusts being reading and mathematics. "These are the two nongraded, sequential curriculum areas in the Continuous Progress Elementary school which extend through both the primary and intermediate components of the school. These areas were emphasized during the morning at [continuous progress] and constituted about sixty percent of a child's day at school" (Reynolds, 1975:30-31). Some important cultural assumptions were: (1) there are certain kinds of knowledge appropriate for the student to master; (2) multiple goals should be utilized to satisfy multiple needs of the students; (3) kids should feel good about themselves and school; and (4) constant supervision and monitoring helps keep learning on track.

The Open School has developed elaborate rationales for its learning program. Its formal doctrine is best outlined in the SEA 1975-76 Plan:

> Open education means providing learning experiences that allow an individual to develop his own particular talents

> and strengths. School activities should be an outgrowth of the interests of children, using the entire community as a laboratory for learning.
>
> Children should learn how to read, write, and solve problems without going through a structural and sequential skill-building curriculum. Space arrangement, group formation, and scheduling should remain flexible. Learning should be an individualized and personalized as possible, but each child should engage in a variety of flexible groupings in order to work cooperatively, understand personal and physical difference among persons, make group decisions and improve communications skills.
>
> Both the teacher and the child should learn from exploring and experimenting. The teacher-child relationship should be one of mutual respect. Children should not be competing or compared with one another.
>
> Open school teachers should have respect for children, be keen observers and responsive listeners and be genuine learners and experimenters. Each teacher must be a skilled diagnostician of children's needs and stages of development, must provide viable options with multiple materials and resources, and must assist the child in making choices and evaluating his activities (SEA, 1973:C2).

Some important cultural assumptions included: (1) students can, with adult guidance, assume responsibility for much of their education; (2) appropriate student learning is not lumped into discrete "subjects"; (2) student interests in activities would provide sufficient motivation for follow-through on projects.

At the Free School, formal doctrine has changed through the project years. In the first year, "freedom" was defined as "a process, a continuum through which an individual gains the abilities to make decisions based on his own desires and the realities of the environment he finds himself in. It involves developing traditional capacities for delayed gratification, self-discipline, and nitty-gritty" (Free School Head Teacher, cited by Winther, 1975:35). Subsequently, the Free School identified eight "Arenas for Freedom":

power/politics
knowledge/action
values/choice
ethics/practice
men/women
race/class
work/worth
money/status

These "arenas" were viewed as comprising an environment of change. Students were to be provided knowledge and survival skills to deal with these aspects of environment. By the project's third year, the Free School had generated a statement of principles dedicating itself to education for radical socialization:

> The Free School is not neutral. It is engaging in a struggle for liberation: liberation from the small, white male-dominated power structure which controls

> and manipulates the economic forces in this country, policies which are deceptively rationalized in terms of our high standard of living, technological advances, and even alternatives in public education; liberation from the controls the ruling class exercises in defining personal "choices" or even collective action. In short, this is liberation from a society which oppresses according to class, race, age, national origin and sex.... The process of actualizing these objectives will never violate this commitment we are making to expanding our vision of the role of educators in the shaping of a new America (Winther, 1975).

Operationalizing this statement included selection of "oppression-free" educational materials, confronting issues such as sexism and racism in society, learning and teaching survival skills, and expanding awareness of the social reform movement.

Cultural assumptions included: (1) "appropriate learning" should be heavily student-referenced; (2) learning is the acquisition of tools for promoting change in a hostile society; (3) responsibility for self is important; (4) it is all right to initiate activities which would carry one into the community.

Of the SEA schools, the junior/senior high school alone lacked a detailed philosophy. First of all, it was to offer secondary analogues of the contemporary, continuous progress and open elementary alternatives. Although these options took a long time to get going (see, for example, Pendergraft, 1975a), the principal stated frequently that it must be "an alternative of alternatives." Whether this slogan was an apt description or a rationalization, the high school lagged behind the elementary schools in developing either a singular philosophy or a multiplicity of systematic philosophic goals for its program. Only the open school program went through a concerted goal-setting process (Pendergraft, 1975a); the "contemporary" and "continuous progress" components were little different than the way things had always been done. However, the high school did generate some interesting alternatives to its traditional regimen in the first four years. In particular, AWARE (A Wilderness and Research Experience) and OCLE (Off-Campus Learning Experience) developed program goals separate from those of the school as a whole. AWARE was committed to learning a total environmental experience through first-hand involvement in field trips, films, speakers, and shared teaching by students and instructors. OCLE was a full-time independent study program dedicated to primarily career education goals. Another program, ALE (Adjusted Learning Environment), was designed to provide personalized concentrated instruction to educationally handicapped (i.e., with poor learning skills or socialization difficulties) students.

In the remainder of our report, we will focus upon the various elementary alternatives and their components of community involvement and technical support. At this time, it may be helpful to provide a brief summary of the descriptive narrative of SEA and address the diagnosis, initiation and definition phases of the change model.

Summary of the Early Strategy

In our diagnosis of the context of change, we found no impending crisis in either the Southeast Community or public schools of Minneapolis. Integration was being effected smoothly and declining enrollments were not yet a major problem. There was considerable variability in desires for educational programs in Southeast and, as we saw, the definition of alternatives allowed for close adherence to existing programs or extreme departures based on the choice of participants. Two alternatives were already in existence; two were created, building on considerable existing interest. University relationships had been generally supportive, as well as community involvement. The momentum of MPS and Southeast was towards change; only the vehicle was missing.

During the project initiation, we saw the mutual interest of administrative leadership and local involvement. The funding agency's interest was in an overall plan for comprehensive change and emphasized local definitions. Program planners were to become program implementors developing a critical sense of ownership and commitment.

Definitions of the program were general and school staffs were free to operationalize the specifics while encouraged to involve the communities they served. Specific programs were not advocated. There was a choice of involvement for staff; transfers within SEA or out of SEA were arranged as necessary to facilitate compatability. Another critical point was the momentum of the program itself. It was beginning and the promise of affluence was a boost to energy, optimism and commitment. Additional staff expertise, materials, and equipment made operationalization possible.

Thus far, we have examined the process of change in terms of the following: (1) a diagnosis of organizational momentum and variability in perceived need for change, (2) program initiation involving key personnel who functioned as planners as well as implementors, and (3) program definitions at the level of overall goals rather than specific innovations. In the next chapter, we will identify a number of factors which facilitated the implementation of alternative schools.

CHAPTER THREE

IMPLEMENTATION

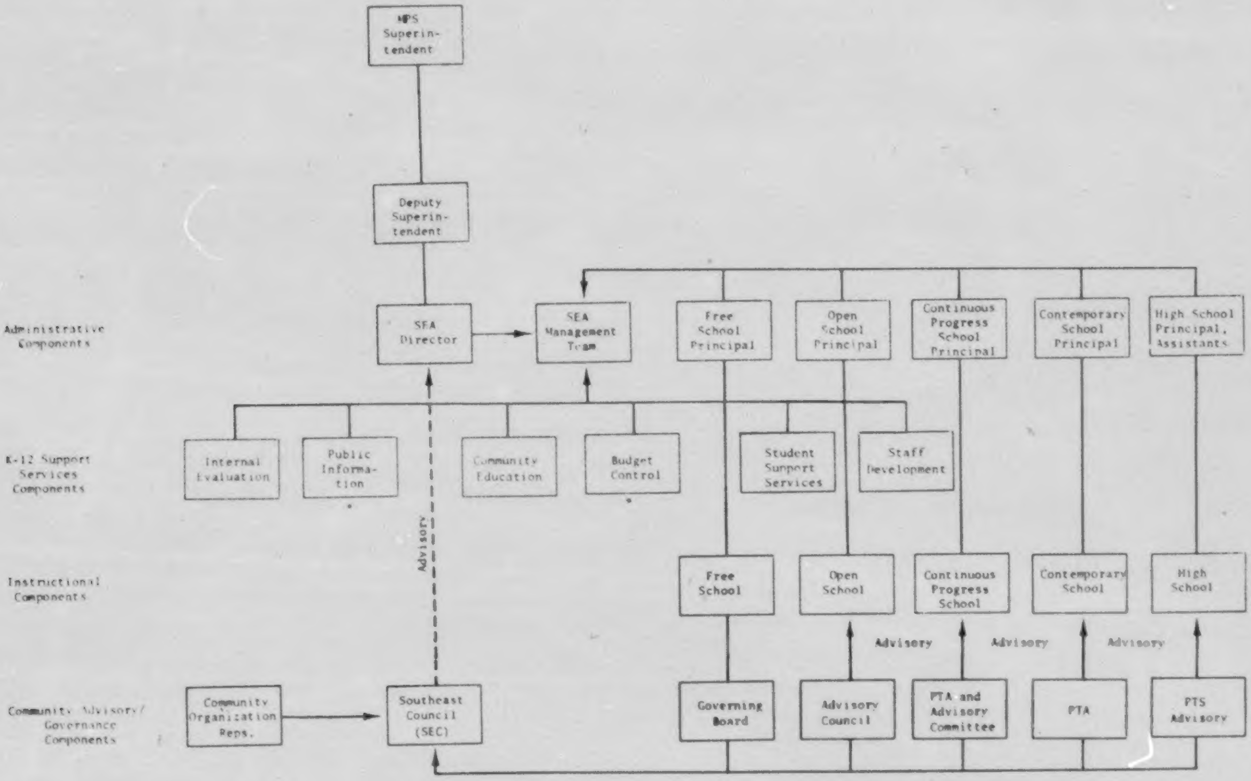
The purpose of this chapter is to examine the procedures where technical and community support were mobilized to assist in the development of alternative schools in Southeast Alternatives (SEA). This entailed modifications in the formal organization of support services and changes in the traditional roles of support staff. And, as we already noted, key persons, both professional and community, who were to staff these components, were involved in the initiation of SEA by participating in the writing and review of the proposal submitted to the National Institute of Education (NIE). In this chapter, we will focus upon the organizational components of SEA as evidenced in the fourth project year. While SEA's formal organization changed repeatedly, priorities remained the same.

A major intent of SEA was to increase the responsiveness of the formal organization or school bureaucracy to the perceived needs, interests and concerns of both the professional staff and the community. While a number of concepts were used to convey this intent (e.g., decentralization and community involvement), there seemed to be four underlying implications for technical and community support in the goals and design of SEA. One, changes from the past in terms of new instructional programs required operationalization in terms of teacher and student grouping and interaction patterns, new curriculum materials, increased use of aides, interns and volunteers and learning settings outside of the school building. Technical support was required to identify, implement, evaluate and redesign these components of instruction. Two, the differences among proposed programs implied that centralized and standardized technical support would be inappropriate. Variability in perceived needs would continue to exist and responsiveness to that variability would require organizational adaptability. Three, the degree of change in some instructional programs would result in increased information needs of parents and a need for increased communication between school and community. Four, choice of alternative instructional programs by parents and students called for a congruence between parent expectations and instructional programs. Parents' awareness of and input into the decisions shaping those programs was a means of facilitating that congruence.

The formal organization of SEA in its fourth year is presented in Figure 1. While an organization chart does not accurately portry the myriad of relationships among project components and participants, it does convey what the organization considers critical in structuring its overall operation.

FIGURE 1

SOUTHEAST ALTERNATIVES FORMAL ORGANIZATION


MPS Superintendent
Deputy Superintendent
SEA Director
SEA Management Team
Free School Principal
Open School Principal
Continuous Progress School Principal
Contemporary School Principal
High School Principal, Assistants
Administrative Components
K-12 Support Services Components
Internal Evaluation
Public Information
Community Education
Budget Control
Student Support Services
Staff Development
Advisory
Instructional Components
Free School
Open School
Continuous Progress School
Contemporary School
High School
Advisory
Advisory
Advisory
Community Advisory/ Governance Components
Community Organization Reps.
Southeast Council (SEC)
Governing Board
Advisory Council
PTA and Advisory Committee
PTA
PTS Advisory

NOTES: 1) * * Non-voting member (1974-75).
2) Management Team and Southeast Council merged into one body in year 5 (1975-76), consisting of SEA Director, School Administrators, and SEC members.

In this chapter we will examine SEA's formal K-12 support services and then its administrative and community components. Our discussion will include a sensitivity to what existed in the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) structure prior to SEA. Five key functions are isolated for discussion. These are: implementing choice; staff support; school-community linkage; organizational monitoring and coordination; and governance and advisory groups. Our primary concern is with the perspective of educators contemplating the design of a technical and community support system for a group of alternative schools. We are interested in specific challenges faced by SEA, the manner in which these challenges were handled, kinds of problems encountered, and "lessons learned." We conclude the chapter with a discussion of the implications of SEA's implementation efforts for other settings.

Implementing Choice

One of the earliest challenges posed to SEA administrators was ensuring not simply that choices among schools were available, but that the SEA community *knew* they were available and *made choices*. Prior to SEA, of course, the challenge did not exist. Families attended schools located in their neighborhood "attendance area" as defined by the central school administration. With SEA, there arrived a seemingly endless series of "things that needed to be done." Among these were getting information about the project to its potential consumers (i.e., SEA parents and teachers); soliciting consumers' choice of school site; devising guidelines for families wishing to transfer; defining relationships to existing MPS services; and, of course, providing and coordinating adequate transportation without which the project would be perceived as a farce. (The extent to which parents and students selected a non-neighborhood school and the reasons for transferring from one alternative to another are discussed in Chapter Five—Choice: Characteristics and Consequences.)

Formal and Informal Public Information

Several organizational service components assumed varying importance over time for school selection. During the project's planning phase, a formal organizational niche was allotted to "public information." Relative to school selection, it played different roles over the years. For example, during the initial hectic months of SEA, public information was but one part of the total effort to assure informed choice. The formal SEA organization was also assisted by committees of paid and/or volunteer parents. The committees sent out flyers and brochures, tracked down addresses, assisted with neighborhood and PTA orientations, compiled tables of responses, and conducted phone campaigns. The SEA director insisted that *everyone* in the SEA community make a recorded choice. As the pre-project summer drew to a close, a small group of parents conducted door-to-door canvassing of the few remaining families who had not chosen through written or phone media.

Choice making continued to be a process that involved both formal and informal networks, role occupants, and organizational levels. To illustrate, by the close of the first year, the public information component of SEA had started a newspaper, developed a slide show, and accommodated visitors. Assistance from individuals or committees of parents, volunteering to conduct speaking tours and orientations, continued. Families contemplating choice were urged to also visit the various alternatives where an orientation was conducted by counselors, community liaisons, teachers, and principals.

By the second year, procedures for choosing schools were worked out in a form that would continue throughout the project with minor adaptations. This procedure may be described as having a formal and an informal dimension. Its formal dimension relied upon using certain times of the year to accomplish school selection. For example, each spring the SEA newspaper, *Southeast Alternatives*, would run a notice announcing a designated week during which parents were urged to visit the SEA schools. The SEA newspaper was sent to every SEA family and was published bimonthly. Also during the spring, "choice cards" were mailed out by each SEA school to all attending families. These requested parents to indicate their preference among the SEA alternatives for the coming year. By the close of the year, the central MPS office would also have published its own attendance projections for each MPS school.

The informal dimension of school selection consisted of both SEA's providing information to prospective parents and prospective parents seeking information about SEA in ways other than the annual choice cards. These included public information office presentations to PTA's and conferences; brochures; phone calls to the information office or the schools; school visits; and the "grapevine"—talking to other parents and attending community meetings. The informal mechanisms of school visits and talks to other parents were by far the most potent information mechanisms for school choice (Almen, 1974a:21-23). Results of annual internal evaluation surveys reveal that both formal and informal public information mechanisms had paid off handsomely. For instance, Almen repeatedly found over 75% of parent respondents indicating they "had received enough information on SEA schools to help them make a wise choice" for their children.

By year four of SEA, choice cards were mailed only to parents who wished to initiate a transfer of schools for the next academic year. Both formal and informal school selection processes had become sufficiently routinized for that to happen.

Transportation in MPS

Busing was not foreign to the MPS system prior to SEA's implementation. During the latter half of the 1960's, several events occurred which helped prepare the ground for increased use of busing during the following decade. By far the most critical factors influencing this series of pre-SEA events were MPS attempts to deal with desegregation and declining enrollments. In Minneapolis these issues were frequently discussed under the umbrella term "quality education."

To briefly illustrate, during the decade of the 1960's, the state reimbursed the city of Minneapolis on a per capita and mileage percentage basis to transport children living beyond certain fixed distances from school. Desegregation was an issue of concern to Minneapolis' new superintendent, who arrived during this time. His initial suggestion was framed around an "open enrollment" policy. This policy promised to provide transportation to any child who wishes to attend a school other than his designated one. Costs would be borne by the city without claims on state aid. Because open enrollment began to become a tool for some majority groups to combat desegregation, the plan required modification.

The modification was "pairing"—e.g., merging a high majority with a high minority building and breaking them into two separate programs (such as pairing K-3 and 4-6 in SEA's continuous progress schools in 1970). Pairing required use of a fleet of buses between schools and again opened up the possibility of state reimbursement. Hand in hand with pairing came implementation of a "pyramid" concept. This entailed identification of certain high need target areas of MPS for which Federal Title funds were available. A related activity was pyramid structuring, which entailed grouping elementary "feeder" schools around an identified secondary school. Title funds largely supported these ventures, some of which were headquartered within separate facilities such as Learning Centers. As these ventures expanded services to minorities and educationally handicapped, this further increased transportation needs.

Along with open enrollment, pairing, and pyramiding, all overlapping in time, came the increasingly worrisome issue of declining enrollments. For example, the high school in Southeast became slated for closure. Merger with the university's high school forestalled that. Again, more transportation was required. Finally, in late 1970 a class action lawsuit resulted in a court ordered requirement for MPS to implement a city-wide desegregation plan. One MPS response was to take existing trends (open enrollment and pairing) and implement a decentralization plan incorporating them where possible. Citizen involvement was solicited; a School Facilities Committee was created to further examine quality education and desegregation; transportation was further expanded.

Transportation in SEA

Transportation services in SEA revealed a pattern of development similar to that described for public information for school selection. In the early days (again hectic ones!), there was considerable parent volunteer committee involvement with the formal organization. This decreased as the need declined in year two and transportation was increasingly handled by the SEA Transportation and Budget person. By years four and five, MPS was assuming almost full responsibility for it. All three parties—parents, the SEA Transportation Coordinator, and MPS Transportation Services—had been involved over the entire period in varying combinations and levels of input.

The Parent Transportation Committee in year one gathered information on addresses, advised MPS on routes, took phone calls from parents with questions, and acted as a legitimized linkage to SEA's informal network. A teacher on leave acted as formal SEA Transportation and Budget representative (replaced by an SEA parent in year two). As the years went by, the process of busing became smoother. For example, in year one all students were initially bused into the Open School, there disembarked, and then were sorted into other buses each assigned to its own school. During year two, addresses began to be gathered in the spring, fed to MPS, and by July a preliminary route schedule was published. The SEA newspaper also published it. Another change was away from assigning a bus to each school (found inefficient due to fixed time routes and resulting "dead time"). Instead, a plan for routine scheduling and cruising was implemented whereby SEA buses could run into, within and out of SEA. (During year one they simply ran within SEA boundaries.) Thus, the initial transfer system at the Open School was eliminated; buses were freed for field trips; moreover, since a reimbursement plan was operative, cooperation with central busing services was facilitated.

In addition to a planned phase out of the SEA Transportation person, considerable flexibility in terms of the involvement of building-level staff with busing was evident. Some buildings assigned a person the task of checking published bus routes and accompanying children to and from buses. Other buildings placed more responsibility for this on students after some initial help.

In terms of numbers, SEA was already served by two buses in year one. It purchased an additional two during that year. During year two, it purchased two more buses, bringing its total to six. During year three, it was served by nine; during year four, twelve; and by year five sixteen buses were rumbling through the project. NIE funds purchased four buses, to be donated to MPS. Two mini-buses were also purchased with federal funds. Buses were awarded to areas on the basis of need.

What was the response of SEA families to busing, which included kindergarten aged children? By the close of year three, 47% of SEA pupils represented either non-SEA residence areas (20%) or SEA residence area pupils attending non-neighborhood schools (27%) (Almen and Rawitsch, 1974:13). Further, regarding the 53% residence area pupils attending neighborhood schools, Kocher notes:

> Additional evidence indicates that it would be wrong to assume that a large proportion of the remaining 53% are attending a school simply because it is closest to their residence. This information indicates that these programs are chosen predominantly because of philosophy, staff, and a myriad of other reasons.
>
> This 47% attending "non-neighborhood" schools is almost double the corresponding figure of 28% in Year 1 of SEA (1971-1972). Furthermore, only 3% of these Year 1 "non-neighborhood" children came from residences outside Southeast. The climb to the corresponding 20% at the end of Year 3 represents an almost seven-fold increase (1975a:94).

Relative to racial/ethnic composition, there were similar upward trends:

> ...minority enrollment in SEA has increased from 10% in the first year of the project (1971-72) to 21% in the fourth year (1974-1975). Corresponding figures for the total Minneapolis Public Schools elementary programs are 17% and 22% respectively. Thus, over the four years of the project total minority enrollment in SEA elementary programs has increased to essentially match the MPS figure (Kocher, 1975:95).

To summarize our discussion of implementing choice, we noted the critical importance of public information, the use of both formal and informal mechanisms of public information, the manner in which the formal organization dealt with transportation, and the close interwoven nature of all of the above relative to school selection and the use of the alternative system over time.

Staff Support Services

Southeast Alternatives represented a substantial challenge to planners responsible for organizing staff support services since few SEA staff had prior experience with functioning within either an alternatives system or specified type of alternative. While the provision of choice of staff at the project's initiation placed staff at sites of interest to them, much remained to be done--particularly in terms of structuring a flexible and responsive service delivery system for staff growth and program development.

Staff Development

Pre-SEA models of MPS staff development were considered inappropriate for several reasons. First, existing procedures were weak for communicating opportunities to staff. For example, staff were frequently unaware of even what conferences were available. Time was a second factor. Although every teacher was allotted one professional development day, few seemed aware of this and of those who were, it was a woefully inadequate allotment. A third problem was that of tailoring services to needs. It was apparent that standardized activities would certainly require considerable adaptation or, more often, replacement to meet the needs of five differing alternative school programs and staff. Few could even predict in year one what would form the content of each building's needs. Perhaps most critical, however, was the need for a sense of responsiveness to be communicated to and maintained with SEA staff. Prior experiences had left feelings of distance and lack of information about a fragmented process of budgeting and decision-making for staff development. Requests would sometimes be marked by undue delay in turnaround. Opportunities would be foregone due to poor timing. Other opportunities would be too rigid or categorical to be of real applicability in one's own building. Sharing with staff in neighboring buildings was virtually absent. In SEA, where K-12 continuity was a programmatic priority, the latter factor would be critical.

During year one of SEA, staff development services were mainly of an inservice nature for program staff. Each SEA component or school would present a request for funds to the SEA Staff Development Director, who retained a centralized budgetary management responsibility. Though shorter turnaround times resulted, the process was still unsatisfactory to both SEA service staff and clients. It required considerable building-to-building promotional work on the part of SEA staff development administration, was still somewhat fragmented, and, more seriously, required expansion to a larger clientele. That is, "staff" needed to be (1) defined more broadly to include administration, aides, resource people, and parents; and (2) better incorporated into processes of needs assessment, prioritization, and decision-making on the use of available resources.

In an effort to address these concerns, an SEA Teacher Center was implemented in the second year to provide a staff development delivery system. It was felt that use of a center would better (1) support K-12 planning and training needs, (2) use the skills of SEA component participants as trainers for other participants, (3) provide general awareness of cross-component staff development activities, (4) probe the potential utility of University of Minnesota and local MPS school linkages, and (5) include community (parents and students) in trainer/trainee roles (Hayen and Shryer, 1975:33). A goal underpinning all of these objectives and one that would continue through the project was decentralizing decision-making.

An SEA Teacher Center board of thirteen members was formed in October 1972. It included elected and appointed members distributed as follows: seven faculty/staff and one administrator from SEA schools, three community appointments from the Southeast Council, and SEA secondary students. This board represented a significant step in the direction of decentralizing decision-making regarding staff development monies and activities. The move was initiated by the Staff Development Director, who functioned as an executive officer. The primary focus of staff development during year two continued to be meeting inservice training needs.

By year three, another significant step was taken with the establishment of a joint University of Minnesota (UM) and Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) Teacher Center to service not only SEA, but a city-wide clientele as well. This collaborative venture, entailing both some administrative and fiscal risk by both parties, was led up to by several precipitating factors. First, in the face of declining enrollments, the merger of the university high school (the College of Education's laboratory school) and the community high school had proved some prior experience with such a collaborative relationship. Formalized with an agreement between the Board of Regents and the MPS Board of Education, the merged school functioned from 1968 through 1973 under a separate policy board of university, school, and community representatives. Dollars were shared and the director of the merged school shared a joint appointment by both institutions.

A second precipitating factor was the reality of the reversal in teacher supply and demand in the early 1970's. A shift in the College of Education's program emphasis towards graduate, continuing, and inservice training was occurring. A final factor was the sheer promise such a collaborative arrangement held for a variety of other mutual concerns: greater articulation between local university and schools in terms of facilities and human/material resources; mutual responsiveness to changes in schooling and teaching; and the excitement of collaborative sharing to obtain help in solving problems.

Decentralized and representative governance structures marked the new UM/MPS Teacher Center. An eight member Teacher Center Board was responsible for overall policy. This board consisted of four members representing the University and four representing the MPS system. University and school teachers, administrators and community members comprised the board, which screened and selected a Director. An In-Service Committee was formed. Composed of elected teachers and parents representing the SEA schools and chaired by an In-Service Coordinator (a former teacher at the local high school), this committee formed the decision-making body for all in-service in SEA not addressed through an annual process of needs assessment. The In-Service Committee, for example, received a certain percentage of the total UM/MPS Teacher Center budget as a "response fund" to meet unanticipated needs during a year. A key feature of the committee was that it screened proposals submitted by peers of the committee's constituent schools or components. The rationale for the committee and this process was based upon the sense of interest, ownership, and motivation gained through direct client involvement in formerly distant decision-making processes. Additional rationales were payoffs in the form of informal sharing; greater client awareness of general SEA staff development plans and activities; and a more effective mode of dispersing resources for either needed supplementation of programs or totally unanticipated, yet worthwhile, needs. In 1973-74, the In-Service Committee allocated some $80,000.

A final aspect of Teacher Center decentralization was the annual needs assessment process itself. This process was initiated with the assignment of a Teacher Center staff person to meet with the building principal and staff to assist them with developing staff development plans for the following year. Small group meetings, personal interviews, and brief questionnaires were used as additional tools in eliciting and clarifying needs. Responses were sorted and dovetailed with both comprehensive organizational needs and more individualized staff needs. Hayen and Shryer note:

> There is at this point a strong temptation to impose a course of action—in the form of a source, seminar or a "packaged" training program. It is essential, however, that staff be very much involved in the designs of the training. Involvement is solicited, in part, by the statement: "If desired, give ideas as to how the needs listed may be met. Describe the Activity/Training/Experience." These ideas and plans become the basis for a training model which best resolves the need. The training design is extended to include a cost figure. All of this information is returned to the school staff for review and prioritizing. The In-Service Committee in the final review may, where necessary, alter training plans to accommodate budget and staff time limitations (1975:35).

Three additional aspects of this process deserve mention. First, it attempted to rationalize staff development in a complex, multifaceted project housing differentially developing components. For instance, each component school was not initially allocated an "equal share" of dollars. Rather a ballpark figure based on size and other fixed factors was initially allocated around which initial planning could occur. Needs assessment might indicate in a given year that one component would require more funds for a particularly promising program (e.g., as occurred with the Community Day Program at the Open School to help free up more staff time among other goals). The assessment process thus allowed for sufficient flexibility to "give more" than what a traditional "equal fair share" might have prohibited. Second, follow-up monitoring was a requirement of each project awarded funds. In addition, sharing and further dissemination were encouraged at the building level and beyond. Finally, the type, content or category of possible activity was deliberately broad in definition. Over the years, Teacher Center sponsored activities included cross-site sharing sessions, convention attendance, site visits to educational models located elsewhere, use of consultants, development of curricular materials, or comprehensive pre-fall workshops involving aides, parents and teachers.

The UM/MPS Teacher Center both as an organization and concept took root quickly and grew. By year three a pre-service component was added, which funneled student interns from local and other higher education facilities through SEA sites. A dissemination network project was added. A Teacher Center was begun in the East Area of MPS, with satellite centers scoped for the other areas as well. Curriculum resource specialists serving SEA fell under the umbrella of the center at varying periods, as did the Community Resource Coordinators. In short, the UM/MPS Teacher Center had become an institutionalized organization that served to literally promote a "planned variation" staff development delivery system rather well suited to a public alternative system. Client response was generally quite positive (Almen, 1974b). It served above all not as an "answer" bank, but rather as a problem-solving facilitator on an organization level. It helped productively coordinate what might otherwise have easily developed into a negatively overextended myriad of needlessly overlapped pieces of action among the various SEA components.

Cadre Resources

Pre-SEA modes of accessing curriculum development help also underwent modification. In many ways, pre-SEA curriculum development services resembled those of staff development described previously. For example, a curriculum development specialist called a "curriculum consultant" normally worked out of the MPS central office and served as a city-wide resource in a specific subject area (e.g., language arts, social studies, math, science). While theoretically "on call" to a school, curriculum consultants functioned more as trouble-shooters than building-specific resource people. That is, they would conduct needs assessments and announce workshops as they rotated around different areas of the city on a designated day of the week.

The initial SEA approach provided a pool of resource people with access to adequate budgets of their own in specific curriculum areas. These individuals, called cadre resources, represented language arts, math, music, environmental studies, science, industrial arts, music, art, and creative dramatics. They were assigned project-wide during year one and expected to serve each school one day per week. A second expectation was that services would only be required for some two years. Some planners, according to certain cadre, felt that this would be an adequate amount of time for materials development, perhaps even computerization of products. Still another initial expectation was that considerable sharing and cross-fertilization among cadre to create "K-12 integration" would occur.

All of these expectations were quickly tempered when tested against SEA programs and their needs. For instance, not all cadre worked at schools, some worked out of a centralized project office. Interdisciplinary sharing was particularly trying for staff serving five schools. Each alternative seemed to reveal rather different types of needs. Some required that a curriculum be developed almost "from scratch"—ground zero in terms of materials, diagnostics, and monitoring systems. Others requested adaptation of existing materials, packaged series, or certain services not available through existing cadre staff.

By year two, a process of critical needs assessment had been conducted. Certain cadre were assigned to schools (e.g., Free or Open) where their skills, interests, and inclinations better matched those of program. Other alternatives (e.g., Contemporary School) preferred to buy into available university consulting services and consultants to meet their needs. In short, a critical process of matching up people or accessing services where that couldn't be done was implemented.

Although initial timelines had been conservative, SEA constantly kept in mind the fact that cadre resources were scoped to be gradually phased out. With that fact in mind, each school underwent the difficult process of prioritizing what, when, and how they would utilize cadre. Some schools were notably more "hardware" oriented than others, preferring to acquire services and durables with long-term potential. Others, less "package" and more people-oriented, preferred intensive workshopping, parent training in variable materials. Certain curricular areas and resource people were formed into centers housed at an SEA site, which served both all SEA schools and eventually city sites (e.g., the Environmental and Science centers at the Contemporary School).

Relative to the service delivery process as a whole, flexibility and responsiveness to building priorities was a primary thrust. Payoffs of the cadre system were more intensive accessibility of cadre at the building level, training and resources with long term potential, and a forced confrontation with the fact of eventual phase-down of the positions. The onus of responsibility for planning phase-down was thus shared by administrators with their staff at the building level. A distinct danger of the system, despite its coordination through the Teacher Center, was a certain distance created from the centralized SEA service structure in other MPS areas. Only time will tell whether the SEA cluster can continue to "make it" and make creative use of a sharply reduced service mechanism available to it in the West Area with which it merged.

Other Strategies of Staff Support

Formalized organizational components devoted to "staff support" were also complemented by other strategies. Key support was provided by the SEA internal evaluation staff, particularly those assigned to specific school buildings for extended periods of time (Giannotta, 1975b). Often these staff worked with individuals or with small groups conducting formative evaluation services in direct response to staff requests. Another means of staff support came through MPS time allotments in the form of regularized weekly "preparation time" allotted to classroom teachers. Frequently overlooked, but equally critical, was the myriad of interpersonal, mutual-support strategies employed at each building. These included teacher pairing (e.g., a new with more experienced staff member) or programs specifically designed to free up "sharing time" (e.g., the Community Day Program at the Open School). It should be noted, however, that the issue of time remained a pressing one throughout SEA and is a "must" consideration to educators contemplating a shift to an alternative system (Pendergraft, 1975b; Giannotta, 1975a). Moreover, a good deal of staff growth in SEA occurred by "learning by doing" despite the availability of the various arrangements for accessing services mentioned above (Pendergraft, 1975b).

To summarize, SEA staff support services mirrored an experiment in the organization and delivery of staff service delivery systems. The Teacher Center, Resource Cadre, and other formalized and nonformalized mechanisms formed important pieces of this experiment. A central theme running through all was greater assumption of client ownership over needs assessment, decision making, and resource dispersal. A related theme was the need for formal organization to walk the fine line between centralized, productive coordination and sufficient flexibility in responding to site-specific defined needs.

Linking Schools and the Community

As noted in Chapter Two, Southeast had a history of formal and informal "network influencing." The SEA formal organization, from its pre-project planning days, not only sought out community networks but sought to rationalize their activities and meld them into a common purpose with its own. (A good deal of the reverse process occurred from the community's standpoint—a fact which lent considerable dynamism to SEA as a kind of competing free market system!) Our discussion below focuses upon two major features of this dynamic, both considered as aspects of the way in which a formal organization of technocrats sought to productively utilize a community and its energies. The first feature concerns the organization's mode of rationalizing a process for using community resources at the building levels. The second feature concerns the organization's exploitation of a dominant aspect of its environment—the local university. (We are not concerned here with community input into governance, which is examined in the following section.)

Formalizing Linkages at the Building Level

Each SEA school had a somewhat different pre-SEA history in using community people and places as resources. They all shared, however, the existing formalized modes of accessing such resources. Such pre-SEA modes consisted of volunteer organizations (e.g., Women in Services to Education—WISE) or, more typically, the local PTA. One teacher at a building might be designated a WISE chairperson and teachers would call on this colleague to recruit tutors. Perhaps the most common procedure was informal—students' parents would be asked by students' teachers for some help.

The SEA Continuous Progress Alternative did have pre-SEA experience with an alternative model of resource recruitment. It had been designated a Continuous Progress school prior to SEA, had a highly organized PTA, and made use of substantial university-related residents in its local neighborhood as it embarked on its new program. In general, however, SEA planners recognized a clear need for a more systematic, efficient and formalized mode of recruiting community energies and, even more critical, keeping SEA communities and schools mutually abreast of project developments.

One of the pre-SEA formal organization's first steps was to build upon what it already had. Three of the community residents who had been involved by the formal organization prior to award of the SEA planning grant were hired as Community Liaisons upon receipt of the planning grant and during proposal preparation. Each was assigned to a district school neighborhood. They were centrally officed in an SEA school and were in direct contact with their neighborhoods (not necessarily restricted to a specific school). They served as an information conduit between the future SEA Director (then proposal coordinator) and SEA neighborhoods. In the project's planning days, these linkages proved invaluable in assisting with the community in initial proposal planning, as well as sounding out and communicating neighborhood sentiments/reactions to early drafts.

Upon receipt of the SEA grant, the Community Liaisons continued as neighborhood linkages, each now working out of the SEA office and complemented by a colleague for the newly created Free School. Again, in the early days of SEA, this group provided a highly useful linkage for the flow of information to and from neighborhoods on such initially complex issues as school selection and transportation. Part of their job concerned fostering a sense of "neighborhood" (though Free School never really had one). The SEA organization also tried to facilitate fostering a group sense among the Liaisons themselves. They would attend weekly meetings with the SEA Director, which also proved an invaluable sharing technique. Community Liaisons continued as school-neighborhook linkages for K-12 concerns for the first two years of SEA. All were SEA parents.

It became quickly apparent (i.e., early in the first year of the project) that such a standardized arrangement fell short of accommodating the diversity of the SEA system. To illustrate, the Open School expressed a need for a more direct link between parents and the school. Part of the impetus behind this need was a desire for specific help on processes of intensified parent participation in decision-making and the need for a better coordinated volunteer program (critical to the program's future). During year one a half-time "Parent Coordinator" was hired at the school as an additional linkage between school and parents. This position continued through year two.

During these first two years, similar concerns were of different importance and magnitude to each building. They were also dealt with in different ways. For example, volunteer coordination was handled at some schools by a Volunteer Coordinator, at others by a Parent Coordinator, at still others by the PTA, and at others by volunteers. Visitors, whose numbers grew quickly and dramatically, were frequently handled by unpaid volunteers during year one, then by individuals (some overlapping with the above roles) paid out of the public information budget in year two.

During years two and three a major planning effort was undertaken at the instigation of the SEA Director. Its purpose: to assess progress and recommend changes. This meeting resulted in the phasing out of Community Liaison positions at most schools, the creation of Visitor Coordination positions (some volunteers) at others, and the emergence of a new position: that of Community Resource Coordinator (CRC). The important factor from the standpoint of the SEA organization planning the second half of the project was allowing sufficient flexibility to each building to plan its own needs, decide whether to return or create new roles accordingly, or to phase out/transfer others. For instance, each school wrote its own CRC job description and revised it each year thereafter. Each school decided upon time, salary, and hiring for this position by whatever processes it deemed appropriate (Farmer, 1975:71).

It is beyond the scope of this discussion to detail the total activities of each position at each school over the course of SEA's development. (For such a treatment, the work of Farmer [1975] provides an excellent source.) However, certain major kinds of thrusts in these positions and developmental characteristics may be mentioned. One key feature common to all of them was the employment of parents in legitimized linkage capacities. Legitimacy became defined and reinforced differentially across the alternatives. At some sites, salary scale or prior experience as a credentialled teacher were more important considerations. Across all sites, matching personalities to school/neighborhood communities and lifestyles was critical. A second key feature was the allowance for job/role redefinition to occur in response to new needs. Example: the assumption by others (e.g., volunteers, paid assistants, other role occupants) of former CRC functions such as visitor coordination. Another feature was recruitment by the formal organization of role occupants who could serve essentially culture broker roles--meditating between parent and staff subcultures (Giannotta, 1975a). Critical to such roles were skills in "translating" needs, concerns, or simply information into mutually intelligible form. For instance, among the varied duties of many CRCs were volunteer recruitment/training; contacting community agencies/individuals as resources; surveying and compiling available parent skills, time, and interests; preparing newsletters, brochures, and folders; organizing orientation sessions for new parents; submitting parent concerns to advisory/governance groups; attending staff meetings; and checking out classrooms to dovetail resources with needs. The list is but selective! Finally, in addition to constituting legitimized linkages for such a myriad of purposes, CRCs represented a considerable mobilization of human/material resources that represented substantial savings (in terms of dollars and energy) to the formal organization. To illustrate, the number of volunteer "person hours" injected into SEA through them was particularly noteworthy (Patton, 1975a).

What were some of the pitfalls involved in merging such roles into the formal system? In a sense, the pitfalls were corollaries in reverse of the above factors. First, time was required for sufficient trust to be built up among staff and parent subcultures between which such individuals moved. Second, overextension and burnout was a constant danger, exacerbated by frustration if role legitimacy became equated with salary level (generally low). Third, in SEA's case, the conscious choices not to be incorporated with the MPS as paid aides (part of civil service) meant a need for alternative modes of assuring continuity. Renewable MPS board/building contracts were the state of the art as of year five, although every CRC position was rated essential by building budget prioritizations then conducted. Fourth, there was the ever present danger of creating a corps of "irreplaceables"—consciously avoided by SEA through counterpart training. Finally, as jobs became more individualized among the alternatives, sharing decreased. Weekly meetings of Community Liaisons in years one and two were replaced by more periodic ones of CRCs in year three. Year three saw the hiring of a CRC coordinator; but the position was funded for only one year. The need for closer sharing of CRCs individual labors (e.g., resource banks created at specific sites) remained a constant.

Linkages with the University

The presence of a major university in SEA's midst was a feature of SEA's "community environment" which also served as a rich resource. We earlier noted that several of the SEA schools had served as demonstration sites during pre-project days. Far more noteworthy were the existing and potential network of relationships which were exploited to both draw resources into SEA, as well as render SEA a resource to the university. Two major types of "recruitment processes" were: (1) those of a formalized nature which eventually came to be coordinated through the UM/MPS Teacher Center and (2) relationships which were more informally exploited.

Prior to SEA, the local high school served as an internship site for a variety of university pre-service teacher preparation activities. In addition there were various city-wide university projects (e.g., Project 60—composed of sixty student interns) which placed some of their interns in SEA elementary schools. In general, however, pre-SEA programs of this sort reflected certain typical characteristics. Programs at the local high school were typically overcrowded and poorly coordinated. Supervising teachers in local schools often had little involvement in the planning of the programs, scant time to properly supervise interns, and little incentive (monetary or otherwise) to participate. The idea of a "joint appointment" between supervisory faculty (e.g., a joint university and MPS position) was virtually nonexistent. Finally, the university typically contracted for placement of students with individual schools over a given period of years.

With the advent of SEA, several new arrangements ensued, either as experimental or permanent organizational components. Again, pre-SEA "networks" were drawn in as building blocks. The thrust of these arrangements was collaboration in a two-fold sense: (1) to increase the "ownership" of internship programs among local MPS school staff and (2) to heighten the level of awareness among university staff of the practicing educator's challenges. To illustrate, an existing secondary staff member joined part of SEA's secondary "cadre" and was placed in charge of program development and 7-12 pre-service at the SEA high school. One new arrangement which resulted was a joint appointment for this staff member, as well as for certain university staff also drawn upon as elementary cadre curriculum specialists by certain of the SEA alternatives. A second arrangement was the payment of supervising teachers on the secondary level through the internship program for services rendered. These individuals were given increased responsibility, with more manageable numbers of interns and less reliance on the local university.

At the elementary sites, programs developed varied according to inclinations and needs. For instance, at the Open School during years two and three, a pre-service internship program called "Project Open" was jointly planned by both Open School staff and university faculty. This provided needed clinical experiences in open/alternative schooling to the university in exchange for welcome human resources for the program. Other country-wide higher educational institutions also negotiated agreements for internship experiences as SEA's visibility grew. Still another source of assistance was a campaign sponsored by SEA/MPS Community Education, soliciting university and community volunteers for the SEA project. By year three, pre-service clinical coordination functions were expanded beyond the local high school to include program responsibility for all pre-service internships, on a K-12 level, across all SEA schools. This function and accompanying staff were merged into the UM/MPS Teacher Center, which had until then dealt mainly with in-service SEA coordination.

Also deserving mention was the use of networks of colleagues, friends, and relatives for a variety of resource purposes. These ranged from serving as visitation sites, coming into schools, or providing a means of distributing information on SEA needs and opportunities for project participation. While difficult to measure, the percentages of university-represented volunteers logged in surveys of volunteerism is impressive (Patton, 1975a).

To summarize, SEA processes of linking community resources to school programs reflected a broad definition of community as human, materials, and geographic possibilities. Community Liaisons and Resource Coordinators furnished vital linkages and performed critical cultural brokerage functions. The SEA formal organization incorporated community advocates, opinion leaders, and considerable amounts of locally available talents and energies. SEA also allowed sufficient "room" for job descriptions to change as old needs were met and new needs arose. No one model of linkage was "pushed" in SEA. Specific schools and communities were encouraged to define individualized versions of "linkaging" in their distinctive ways.

Service Monitoring and Coordination

Thus far, our discussion of selected SEA support services underscores the complexity of the formal organization. Two critical needs of the organization were feedback and coordination. Feedback was critical since without it productive self-reflection, modifications, and renewal would be impossible. Coordination was critical to maintain effectiveness and organizational identity in the midst of complexity.

Feedback

Several SEA service components were concerned with feedback. One of these was the staff and director of the SEA internal evaluation department. As a semiautonomous MPS administrative unit, SEA had its "own" evaluation section. Its charge was to provide formative evaluation services in the form of timely and relevant feedback to project decision-makers. It concerned itself with project-wide issues (e.g., characteristics of student populations drawn to the alternatives, parent opinion surveys, staff surveys, or various critical concerns to the project as a whole). It also provided building and component specific services which took a variety of forms. For example, some buildings requested an on-site evaluator--particularly new programs such as the Open and Free Schools. Such staff performed studies deemed priorities by the building and/or responded to individual staff requests (e.g., examining use of space in a room).

The Internal Evaluation Team was staffed by both technocrats trained in traditional evaluation techniques, as well as parents. Some of the staff exhibited affinities to "alternative" evaluation approaches. All staff employed a broad array of techniques: surveys, questionnaires, observations, criterion-referenced monitoring, documentation, and analysis of student-work and records to mention but a few. Eclecticism characterized the staff's background and overall composition—as well as their foci, research techniques, and preferences for "types" of evaluation services. This eclecticism was a distinct strength, given the spectrum of service requests as the project's various components developed in their individual ways. Multiple role occupancy (e.g., parents as evaluators) provided a legitimized service linkage in frequently quite trying work environments. Over time it was also demonstrated that the use of parents to assume major staffing responsibilities was clearly a viable option.

Internal evaluation feedback was of considerable utility to the formal organization in several ways. First, project-wide studies—particularly surveys of parents and student characteristics—furnished critical data on a core issue for any alternative system: namely, client satisfaction. Similar issues included information on types of client populations; whether and how much choice was being exercised; or why clients patronized the options they did. Second, annual studies of this sort gave a developmental profile of the project—as opposed to a somewhat less reliable "snapshot." Third, site-specific services made badly needed assistance available to programs which required more "intensive care" due either to their nature or novelty.

Internal evaluation also reflected some particularly difficult problems. First, as a separate entity from MPS services, its post-SEA future hinged upon being "picked up" by the city along with several other SEA pieces similarly competing to be "picked up." Second, though a tool for staff and program development, it had been separated by design from the Teacher Center. Third, its initial operations had required considerable lead time to assess needs and roles, partly due to its having been left to sort itself out from external evaluation by a costly oversight in project design. The "sorting" process consumed a year as "clarifications" from first the U.S. Office of Education and then NIE, SEA, MPS and the external evaluation became enmeshed in a hopeless and still partially unresolved "imbroglio." Fourth, its initial budget projections were low, causing some project resentment as they were raised in year two. Fifth, planning for functional continuity—in the face of fiscal discontinuity—might have occurred earlier. Some promising alternatives were being undertaken in this respect rather late in the project—e.g., parent training. All of these problems mirror "factors well worth as early consideration as possible" (Giannotta, 1975b).

A second service component concerned with feedback was the SEA Public Information Office. This component published the SEA newspaper, prepared brochures, coordinated project visitors, gave innumerable presentations to local/national audiences, and, equally critical, was a potent force in shaping and maintaining SEA image projection.

The newspaper carried summaries of internal evaluation reports (in layman's language); referred readers to where and how to obtain reports as well as information on various project components; and helped create a sense of common identity and pride in the project. Directed by an SEA parent, this component touched also every aspect of the organization. It assisted with mobilizing parents; keeping the community up to date; school selection; announcing staff development occurrences; or carrying reports from parents, students, administrators and visitors. By year five, some 90,000 newspapers had been distributed locally and nationally; over 30,000 brochures on SEA dispensed; some 7,000 visitors accommodated; and countless phone calls answered. Publications were pleasing and professional, serving their purposes well. Several of the paper's functions were scoped to be picked up by the West Area News—sent to every residence—with a circulation of some 90,000.

A final feedback mechanism consisted of two functions partially related to SEA's federal status. These were quarterly reporting and budgeting. They were coordinated through the SEA Transportation/Budget section. Initially staffed by a released MPS teacher, this position was filled in year two by an SEA parent with prior management consulting experience with MPS.

Both budgeting and reporting underwent refinement over time. During the early days of SEA, primary fiscal control rested with the SEA Director. All requisitions funneled through him. Fiscal planning for SEA was somewhat centralized in the SEA Director, the internal evaluation director, and the Teacher Center Director. We saw earlier the decentralized developments of the Teacher Center over time. A similar trend, but by no means as swift or pervasive, occurred relative to budgeting processes in SEA.

The trend reflected a gradual loosening of fiscal reins over time as well as a more conscious, rigorous attempt to tie budgeting into rationalized goal setting, priority selection, and available resource attachment as a basic management/accountability system. Over the years, reporting became both more specific and sophisticated, as did budgeting. Each program prioritized, with varying degrees of participant input depending upon the SEA site, its operations into "fixed" MPS assets (by virtue of opening its door each year), its top requirements to continue in its chosen program direction, and its "willingness to be foregone through negotiation" items.

The SEA Business Advisor assisted with these procedures, watchdogged MPS reporting of expenditures, trained administrators in the system, and kept project participants abreast of new fiscal opportunities. As with transportation, the service was consciously designed to be phased out, yet leave administrators with skills that could transfer to the time when they would again prepare one budget (MPS) instead of two! By year five, a completed prioritized budget had been prepared by each alternative, bound with a single document, and submitted to the West Area Superintendent for his consideration. It represented a "bottom up," as opposed to the "top down" planning process that characterized the early years.

Processes of both periodic budgeting and reporting forced a considerable degree of organizational self-reflection, assessment and controlled renewal.

Coordinating It All

SEA had by design a director, a formal MPS role occupant responsible for the project's administration. Year one witnessed some internal conflict as to his formal authority. His organizational position was clarified by the MPS Superintendent, who reaffirmed his position as chief administrator in the project in January 1972. The Director was made "equal" to an area superintendent, thus giving him considerable formal power. Yet such a clarification would have been of little value had not other dynamics also occurred. Its primary impact was to render the Director more secure in his position and thus able to gradually and productively wield social, political and economic forms of power in the days ahead.

Power was but one factor in coordination. Equally critical were time for the organization to falter and learn; to merge community and formal system interests, talents, and wills into creative compromise, organizational adaptation, and problem solving; and to develop as a sociocultural system reflecting diverse subcultures with sufficient overlap to function as an effective whole. It is not surprising that several things began to occur: a loosening of the reins across all of the functions thus far discussed; or a considerable degree of shared roles and role overlap. Various components were willing to share fiscal as well as social support; e.g., some role occupants were paid out of different component budgets over the years. SEA was complex, yet small enough for a system of shared concessions and values to quickly take root. The key was a sufficient sense of efficacy registered in the minds of diverse project participants as they faced challenges, failures, and successes.

The central administrative structures which coordinated service delivery within SEA changed as adaptation was deemed timely. The early years saw the director huddled in weekly meetings with Community Liaisons, the internal evaluation director, the Teacher Center director, and other representatives of the support services discussed. By year two, a Southeast Community Education Council (SEC) was forged. Year three saw the creation of a Management Team. Year four passed with both groups seeing a need to attempt a merger. Year five witnessed the formation of a truly challenging organizational venture: a unified SEC/Management Team, consisting of MPS staff and parents (discussed in Chapter Six of this report). We now turn to a discussion of the governance and advisory groups of SEA.

Governance and Advisory Groups

While we have already focused upon many of the decision-making arenas and various procedures for community involvement in SEA, this section will discuss the formally constituted governance and advisory groups. We will examine project-wide groups and then school specific groups, discuss several factors which seem to influence the formation and functioning of these groups and conclude with a discussion of what they can realistically accomplish in the public school setting.

Project-Wide Groups

The central administrative body in SEA, accountable to MPS, consisted of an SEA Management Team. The Management Team was composed of the SEA Project Director, the building principals (and two additional administrators in the case of the Junior/Senior High School) of the several alternatives, and key SEA support staff. SEA support service staff represented on the Management Team consisted of the heads of the following components: community education, internal evaluation, the teacher center, and student support services. With the exception of these four SEA support service staff representatives, all members exercised voting power, with the SEA Director voting only in the case of a tie. (In year four, however, support service representatives also voted.) Formed in the spring of 1973, the Management Team provided decision-making leadership in such areas as project planning, budgeting, personnel, staff development, and overall SEA-wide policy formulation.

A second major body designed to act in an advisory capacity to the Management Team was the Southeast Community Education Council (SEC). Created during the first year of the project, the SEC's membership of eighteen individuals was composed of elected parents, staff, and in the case of the Junior/Senior High School, students representing each SEA school alternative. It also included appointed representatives from selected community agencies (such as the three Community Improvement Associations and the Southeast Minneapolis Planning and Coordinating Council). The SEC formed the principal formal vehicle of community input into project-wide governance.

While bylaws of groups are usually relegated to an appendix, we have included parts from them in the text because they best convey the intents and strategies of SEA. Also, the bylaws provide a model for consideration by others.

Management Team

The purpose and procedures of the Management Team are as follows:

SEA MANAGEMENT TEAM BYLAWS

II. Purpose of the SEA Management Team

A. The team will consider, take action on and provide direction for solution of SEA K-12 issues.

1. Solicit and consider the advice of the Southeast Community Education Council on matters within their defined role.
2. Review K-12 service center functions, positions and staff replacements and act on screening committee recommendations and in turn make the recommendation to the Deputy Superintendent through the SEA Director. The K-12 staff positions are defined as follows:

a. All evaluator positions
b. Public information specialist
c. Business advisor
d. Community education coordinator
e. All K-12 resource specialists
f. Student support services coordinator
g. Director

3. Review the current plan, the contract blue book and the scope of work, and decide what modifications are necessary to satisfy requirements of approved scope of work and to accommodate the changing needs of the project.

4. Review, monitor, and give directions to SEA administrative/governance operations.

    a. Southeast Council
    b. Continuous Progress School Coordinating Committee
    c. Free School Governing Board
    d. Open School Advisory Council
    e. Junior/Senior High School Advisory Committee
    f. Contemporary School PTA Board
    g. SEA Management Team

    (The Teacher Center Board is responsible to the University of Minnesota-Minneapolis Public Schools administrative committee.)

5. Review existing budgets and determine fiscal management responsibilities and decide what modifications will take place.

B. The team will give impetus to a project cohesiveness through directives and by example.

1. Communications between components will be enhanced and, in fact, directed.

2. Coordination of the functions of other SEA agencies (for example, Southeast Council, Teacher Center Board and Director) will be enhanced and directed.

C. The SEA Management Team will evaluate the decision making process in SEA and take action to effect appropriate changes to better the processes.

III. Process and Procedure

A. The meetings will be run according to parliamentary procedure and are open to the public.

B. The SEA Director will chair the meetings as a vote-in-case-of-tie member.

C. The Management Team will regularly meet biweekly. Special meetings can be called by the SEA Director.

D. The meeting agenda will be sent to members before each meeting.

1. An item may be placed on the agenda by phoning the director's secretary up to three days before the meeting date.

2. Agenda items may be proposed by any member of the Management Team.

3. Agenda items may be proposed by a person or group not on the team. This person or group of people may attend the part of the meeting that pertains to their agenda item. The director's secretary will give them a specific time after the agenda is set.

E. The minutes of each meeting will be distributed to team members and each experimental component of SEA.

F. Decisions will be by consensus of the Team. If consensus is not reached, the decision will be made by majority vote.

G. The SEA Director may veto any decision of the Management Team. Any veto action must be taken during a meeting and rationale given. The Management Team can override the veto by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present.

It is critical to note three characteristics of the Management Team. One, it was the only body that was empowered to veto an SEA administrator's decision. This was done by a two-thirds vote. Two, while searching for consensus, the group did not allow this goal to prevent the effective functioning of the group in terms of making decisions and moving to new items of business. Three, initially membership did not include any non-school participants. After some conflict, however, members from the SEC were requested to have two observers at the Management Team meetings. They were, however, non-voting members.

We found that the Management Team devoted most of its time to overall project issues rather than building level issues. It dealt with issues of law, transportation, personnel, federal programs in SEA, and many city-wide issues such as decentralization, desegregation, evaluation and staff development. Early in year four (1974-75) the Director emphasized that dwindling financial support was a key issue and plans should be made as early as possible. Nearly sixty percent of the first twelve meetings dealt with 1975-76 planning, especially budget and staff priorities.

It was difficult not to admire the smooth and efficient operations observed during the Management Team's meetings. We found that a great deal of informal interaction took place between the membership of the Management Team, consequently the meetings were archetypical business only meetings. Maintenance activities were engaged in prior to formal meetings, confirming the importance of the informal social structure to any organization.

Southeast Council

The Southeast Council (SEC) was the other project-wide governance group. The rationale for establishing the Southeast Council and its functions, abstracted from its bylaws, are as follows:

SOUTHEAST COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL COUNCIL BYLAWS

I. Rationale and Operational Guidelines

A Southeast Community Educational Council is needed to give leadership to the development, maintenance, and evaluation of a comprehensive educational program for the Southeast public schools. Such a council shall be a community expression of community involvement in school affairs and shall emphasize the strong advisory role teachers, parents and students have a right to have in their public schools.

The council shall serve in an advisory capacity to the director. The council shall be expected to operate within all legal policies of the Minneapolis Board of Education. The director will have the authority to accept or reject the council's recommendations. All council meetings shall be open to the public.

II. Functions

The Council shall:

1. be involved in recruiting and interviewing candidates for administrative positions in the several schools and positions having K-12 across-schools responsibilities as vacancies occur or as new positions are created from time to time. One or more members of the council shall serve in interviewing and recruiting. Participation by committee members shall be determined by the council and director.
2. make an annual assessment of the director's performance and report same to the director. Procedures shall be determined by the council.
3. recommend to the director for hiring candidates to serve in the several schools' community education programs. The council itself would serve as the community education council for the Southeast schools under guidelines already established by the Board of Education.
4. review regularly the evaluation reports prepared about the Southeast educational program and/or suggest aspects of the program needing further evaluation. Make recommendations to the director for the allocation of financial and human resources from the Minneapolis Public Schools, University of Minnesota, and the federal government to so meet those objectives.
5. regularly monitor and review the progress towards the objectives of SEA. A high priority item in this respect shall be providing leadership in recommending policy whereby K-12 continuity will be assured at the end of the SEA project, through mutual development and coordination between the Management Team and the Southeast Council.
6. serve as a clearing house of information about the educational plans and programs in the several schools and serve as a community sounding board for suggestions, criticisms, and opinions about the total Southeast instructional program.

7. hold a public hearing on any educational issue if a majority of the council so approves.
8. establish an SEC Library and/or Archives on Governance to be used by SEC and member organizations.
9. undertake additional functions as needed and/or desired by the director and the council by mutual consent.

It is important to note that while the SEC was an advisory body and the Director was "free" to accept or reject its recommendation, the SEC held considerable influence over the functioning of SEA. Further, it was considered appropriate for the SEC to evaluate the performance of the Director each year. These evaluations were conducted by SEA's internal evaluation component and presented and reviewed in public meetings. The Southeast Council also served as a clearing house of information for the community, including the reporting of Management Team meetings.

The issues that came before the SEC differed from those considered by either the Management Team or the school-specific groups. During the first half of the 1974-75 school year, the SEC dealt almost exclusively with the area decision problem. As part of the overall plan for SEA it was to merge with a larger entity in the MPS. This meant blending with the North, East or West pyramids' administrative units. It was the SEC's single most important problem of the year. When not considering the area merger question, the SEC was the recipient of a great deal of information from the Director and his staff. Their task was to attend to area-wide problems and concerns and the Director was responsible for providing the group with the information necessary to make rational and realistic decisions.

Unlike the Management Team, the SEC required a great deal of time and effort for group maintenance. The informal networks did not provide support to large segments of the group. Many members communicated with one another only during meetings, thus requiring meeting time to solve social-emotional problems confronted in their deliberations. The group, however, was able to perform tasks at a relatively efficient rate with some direction from the chairperson and project director.

Participation was generally satisfactory with staff persons frequently the most vocal. Parents were not the heaviest contributors in all cases, but they did not appear intimidated by other participants. Student members frequently contributed, but often their opinions were requested rather than a result of their own initiative. Students and parents were, in general, satisfied that their input was valuable. Staff persons were aware of their own tendency to engage in monologues but felt that their input was important--even if sometimes overdone.

The SEC, then, was able to resolve the basic problems of groups, and balance task with social-emotional concerns. Levels of satisfaction were high and meetings were well attended. All members took part in discussions even though there was a broad quantitative separation of verbal behavior. The project director frequently acted as the task leader but not in a formal sense. The chairperson exhibited increased confidence as the group developed and moved the group through some thorny problem areas.

School-Specific Groups

While the goals of SEA were to have each school provide a formal setting to facilitate community participation in decisions related to school matters, the intent was for each alternative to locally define and operationalize the structures and activities to accomplish that end. As a result, the priorities and concerns of both principals and parents came into play and created considerable variability in the purposes and functions of governance and advisory groups at the building level. Of the five buildings and governance groups, we have decided to provide a descriptive summary of two—the Contemporary School and the Open School. These have been selected to provide a contrast in the ways in which a community can participate in decision-making; both instances were compatible with the desires of the community. (These descriptions are from the summaries of the ethnographies of each alternative school completed by the external evaluation.)

Contemporary School

> [The Contemporary] School is typical of the majority of city elementary schools in its relation to the larger bureaucracy. The School runs smoothly and competes well because staff and parent governance groups are adept at working within the system. Leadership in the school is task-oriented; such involvement is synonomous with hard work and there is little competition for key political roles.
>
> The formally chartered model of parent "governance" is embodied in the PTA and PTA Board, as in most other neighborhood elementary schools in the city. The functions of the PTA are largely ceremonial, the larger group being convened mostly for "Meet-the-Teacher-Nights," special programs, school orchestra concerts, and other community social functions. Most official business and decision-making is conducted by the PTA Board, composed of the elected constitutional officers of the PTA, the chairpersons of standing committees, the principal, Community Education Director, and ex officio staff representatives. Through the Board, the PTA sponsors a wide range of functions and activities, such as school pictures, Room Mothers' Tea, Patrol Picnics, the Fall School Picnic, Kindergarten Roundup, etc. The Board's functions are largely concerned with raising money and supporting school programs. Among the more important sources of revenue are the Annual Fun Fest, a Book Fair, and (in 1973) a candy sale; contributions are made to the school for a variety of needs not covered by public school funding. The PTA Board also deals with broader concerns of school policies, such as the "Future of SEA/[Contemporary School]" issue, where they affect the community as well as the school.
>
> Power and authority within the school are subject to the monolithic nature of the (Minneapolis) Public Schools bureaucracy. The principal is the bureaucracy's main agent of authority and has the official mandate to govern the school. In practice, many decisions are made by

certified staff in their weekly meetings, or in the large number of committees upon which they serve. The PTA Board and Staff have an unwritten understanding that instruction, curriculum and program development are the "territory" of staff and that they will manage these functions. Teaching style and curriculum are viewed explicitly as inviolate domains of teaching staff.

Issues affecting the entire school community normally evoke a joint response from staff and parent governance groups. In the instance of the Future of [Contemporary School]/SEA issue, the occasion of an SEA-wide set of critical decisions, the PTA Board worked with the staff to achieve a single position for the entire school community. Political priorities of the...community are the following: (1) preservation of the integrity of the community; pulling together to achieve a "united front" in facing a common threat; (3) the delegation of power and authority by consensus to those with recognized ability and expertise; (4) avoidance of internal dissension and second agendas; (5) political participation is regarded as work rather than a source of prestige or status, and is valued because work is valued and tasks need to be done (Nelson, 1975a).

Open School

During the first half of Year 1, [the Open School] faced the decision as to the type of formal governance model it desired as a vehicle for staff and parent input into school governance, i.e., decision-making processes affecting school policy formulation and implementation. After preliminary investigation and debate on possible models, followed by a referendum, an advisory council model was agreed upon. [An] Advisory Council...was formally convened in the winter of 1972. Initially, it contained over 25 members, representing staff, student, parent, and other categories of membership (e.g., maintenance, secretarial, university-program, etc.). By-laws were drawn up, officers elected, and a difficult process of role definition began. A bewildering array of decisions was faced by the [Advisory] Council during its first year.

By year 3, several changes were strikingly evident, particularly in membership structure (which reflected a much smaller group of people. In 1973-74, the [Advisory] Council was composed of five staff members elected at-large by the parents. The principal and CRC were non-voting members. There were no student members, although several strategies had been attempted by... adults in this regard over the first two years.

Council parent members were nominated and elected by the previous spring so that initial fall meetings saw the election of [Advisory Council] staff members as well as [Advisory Council] officers. The [Advisory] Council met bi-weekly throughout the year, with half of those meetings being held in the evening. Meetings ran an average of three hours.

[Advisory Council] parent and staff membership tended to reflect early project parent and staff advocates, though not entirely. Structurally, the council formed an umbrella organization for a large number (some 25) of standing and ad-hoc committees. Due to staff size, membership on these committees frequently overlapped. Their composition generally reflected staff, parents, or both.

The committees dealt with a broad array of issues such as hiring of new staff, budgeting, enrollments and long-term planning, public relations, evaluation, community resources and transportation, or programs for five-year-olds. Examples of committees composed primarily of staff included the principal's advisory or orientation of new personnel committee. Some...parent committees included the [school] newsletter group, twenty telephoners for quick contact with the entire parent body, or the math games committee.

The [Advisory Council] committees were complemented by formal [school] representatives to various SEA-wide governance bodies (such as the Southeast Council and Teacher Center) as well as traditional MPS institutions (such as curriculum organizations, teacher federations, etc.).

The [Advisory] Council functioned as an official parent/staff advisory body to the principal. While its by-laws mandated that all "significant" issues affecting school policy come before it for consideration, such a formal mandate frequently encountered differential interpretations. As the school program developed, decisions relating to instruction (particularly of a daily nature) came to be the purview of staff, through staff meetings. Overall organizational support decisions, particularly requiring parent support, generally came to the [Advisory] Council as well. For example, during 1973-74, only 4 of 51 [Advisory Council] decisions related directly to substantive issues of curriculum and instruction. The others were distributed over such areas as the [Advisory] Council structure itself; evaluation; social and/or fund raising events, ceremonies, and rites; positions on SEA-wide governance and administration policies; positions on issues emanating from MPS policies; enrollment; hiring; budgeting; and the community day program.

The governance processes evidenced in [Advisory Council] committee, and staff meetings reflected a model of attempted diffusion of traditional bureaucratic power, authority, and responsibility. Thus, similar agenda items were frequently brought by the principal to the attention of all three groups. A model of "process leadership" was utilized, whereby major decisions were

> shared if possible, with specific leaders or groups taking responsibility for presenting options to larger constituencies. However, such a model frequently encountered problems through sometimes conflicting perceptions of legitimate domains among staff and parents, as well as through the press of time on certain types of decisions. This frequently placed the principal in a "culture broker" and "middleman" role. In general, however, the partnership between parents and staff in year 3 seemed to have stabilized and benefited heavily from experiences of years 1 and 2. The principal had also been hired by parents and staff in year 1 (Giannotta, 1975a).

A Comparison

While the Open School and Contemporary School differed considerably in "community participation," each shared a critical characteristic—the school was responsive to the type of participation in school matters described by parents. Satisfaction was high in both instances. Contemporary School parents were satisfied with a separation of school and community in formal school functions; Open School parents were satisfied with an integration of school and community. Satisfaction had been documented by the parent surveys of the internal evaluation team of SEA.

Other Groups

Neither the Junior/Senior High School not the Continuous Progress School were able to establish an effective forum for parent participation in decision-making. At the secondary level...

> The Principal's Advisory Group did not meet frequently and, at the meetings they did hold, very little was either attempted or accomplished. Analysis of the four meetings we attended during the 1974-75 school year indicated an imbalance in attention to social-emotional problems of the group. Concerns were voiced over the racial composition of the students' representatives. Also, the adults present included several staff members who dominated the proceedings with tales of the difficulty of their teaching assignments. All in all, the meetings were not a satisfactory setting for addressing problems of shared decision-making. Participants voiced dissatisfaction with the meetings and accused the... principal of being condescending in his attitude towards parents (Rider, 1975).

At the Continuous Progress School, the Principal's Advisory Council seemed unable to come to grips with its purpose for existence. Analysis of meetings and the observations of the ethnographers led to conclusions that community participation was not a high priority at Continuous Progress School, the formal group spent considerable time on group-maintenance as opposed to task-related issues, and yielded to the principal's assertive behavior (French and Reynolds, 1975; Rider, 1975).

The Governing Board of the Free School was initially designed to do just that—govern. The ethnography of the Free School, however, points out that it only achieved advisory status.

> Originally, the Free School established no internal administrative authority, but the need soon became apparent to identify one individual who would relate to the larger bureaucracy. Consequently, a staff member was elected "head teacher"; his responsibilities included general program coordination, teaching and, as administrative representative of the Free School, negotiating with external forces. Later that same year, the Free School community agreed to elect a governing board comprised of staff, students and parents. The initial purpose of the governing board was to alleviate the head teacher from some administrative duties; however, as this concept further developed, an effort was made to grant full decision-making power to the board. This has been a major point of conflict since the public school system only recognizes a chief administrator or principal as having the authority to govern any public school. The Free School Governing Board has continued to strive for recognition as an autonomous decision-making body; yet in matters regarding functions of the school system itself, the board is acknowledged only in an advisory capacity (Winther, 1975).

Factors Influencing Participation

Community participation in SEA led to an identification of three general factors influencing participation: (1) dissatisfaction with school programs increases community desires for participation (Free School and Open School), (2) the innovativeness of school programs increases community desires for participation (Free School and Open School), and (3) the principal is a key to facilitating participation. We also noted, however, that community satisfaction with their involvement in school affairs is not dependent upon any one type of participation. Indeed, it would seem that to attempt to implement the Open School model of community participation at the Contemporary School would be unsuccessful. How do you determine the appropriate type of participation? Participants in SEA would reply: "Ask the community." There are several guides, however, which emerge from our observations of SEA governance and advisory groups and are consistent with other research on "shared decision making" involving teachers and principals.

The community, like teachers, are not likely to be interested in all decisions that effect the operation of the school.* Several studies have found that teachers expressed resentment when required to work on committees or attend meetings devoted to decisions they felt the principal should make (Chase, 1952; Bridges, 1964). Bridges (1967) notes that teachers have a "zone of indifference" within which administrators' decisions will be accepted without question. If the administrator seeks to involve teachers within this zone of indifference, resentment, ill will and opposition is likely to result.

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*The following discussion is drawn from the work of Edwin M. Bridges' "A Model for Shared Decision Making in the School Principalship" (1967).

As we observed in SEA, the zone of indifference for parents was not the same at the Open School as it was at the Contemporary School.

There are two criteria to apply to determine a group's zone of indifference. One is the test of relevancy. Decisions which are relevant are those that have direct consequences for the group; Bridges notes the issues of relevance for teachers.

> When the teachers' personal stakes in the decision are high, their interest in participation should also be high. Decisions of this type are those which deal primarily with the teachers' own classroom affairs, e.g., methods of teaching, materials to be used, content to be taught, techniques for evaluating progress of pupils, decoration and furnishing of the classroom, and handling pupil disturbances. Principals who attempt to make unilateral decisions in matters such as these will encounter resistance from teachers and eventually will alienate them (1967:3).

For parents, issues relating to busing of students, curriculum priorities, staff competencies and philosophies and evaluations of instructional programs are likely to be of relevance.

A second test for establishing the zone of indifference is the test of expertise. Bridges again presents the case:

> Teachers are likely to be uninterested in considering matters quite outside their scope of experience and sphere of competence. To involve them in decisions which they are not qualified to make is to subject them to frustration. For an individual to be interested in participation, he must not only have some stake in the outcome but also the capability of contributing to the decision affecting the outcome (1967:4).

Parents, therefore, might be interested in the priority given to reading instruction in an alternative, but not in the design of that program. In SEA, parents of the Open School included professionals with backgrounds in education and others who had read extensively the literature on Open Schools. They possessed expertise, or certainly familiarity, with the issues of Open Schools.

Participation, then, is influenced by a number of factors that suggest issue-centered interests rather than broad constant involvement. In SEA, we observed increases and decreases in parent participation as issues of relevance emerged and were resolved.

Outcomes of Parent Participation

In SEA, parent participation was perceived as a "good," a value rather than a hard fact that would enhance public education. How it would improve public schools was not specified, just accepted. Within education, parent participation has many connotations, diverse expectations and little understanding. Frequently it is discussed in the context of conflicts over school personnel, busing or textbooks. SEA was not an arena of conflict between the school and its community.

Parent participation in SEA did not accomplish or lead to a number of outcomes. One, we have no evidence that it led to better quality of instruction or higher achievement scores. Two, it did not lead to disrespect for the professional competencies of principals and teachers. Three, parents did not run the schools nor claim or provide the expertise for designing the specifics of instructional programs. During years one and two, however, the initial intensity of involvement by parents of the Free and Open schools were often perceived by SEA staff as out of balance. Four, parent governance and advisory groups were inefficient in the sense that they required more time on the part of school people, although school people contributed to this inefficiency. Inefficiency was reduced, however, when groups agreed upon their purposes and became comfortable with their membership.

Parent participation did accomplish three things. One, it provided a public forum for presenting the rationales for decisions, a strategy we feel increased the likelihood of higher quality decisions. Two, the public received an education in the complexities of administering public education. An SEA participant has made both of these points (Poppele, 1975). Three, community participation has led to greater consumer satisfaction and sense of control and ownership of the public schools program and priorities (a theme also identified by several SEA participants).

As a final note, it is important to add that community participation in governance and advisory groups was part of a large pattern of community involvement and support in SEA.

Factors Facilitating Implementation

The implementation of alternative schools in SEA, as we have discussed, was enhanced by several factors prior to the implementation effort itself. These included (1) a diagnosis of organizational momentum and variability in perceived need to change, (2) initiation involving key personnel who function as planners as well as implementors, and (3) definitions at the level of overall goals rather than specific innovations of instructional staffing, organization or programs. The implementation of the proposed program in SEA was also subject to a number of factors not directly evidenced in technical and community support activities. Rather, they were part of the overall strategy and context of change in SEA—political or personal variables as opposed to substantive strategies of technical and community support.

In this concluding section of Chapter Three, we will examine four factors which were also part of SEA's strategy of change. We feel these factors are generalizable to other settings and should constitute a conscious part of the efforts to design strategies to implement alternative schools. They are: (1) power to change, (2) role of financial resources, (3) risk reduction and (4) personal rewards. While we focus on SEA in our discussion of these factors, other settings will have comparable sources of influence and constraint on efforts to change. The context of change can be assessed for these factors and the implementation strategy can be designed to address them.

Power to Change

Southeast Alternatives was able to obtain the power to make instructional decisions consistent with its desire for variability. Central to the legitimacy provided by the Experimental Schools Program, SEA was no longer part of the mainstream of Minneapolis Public Schools in terms of fiscal and program responsibility. While SEA was not independent of the Minneapolis Public Schools and their regulations, policies, and priorities (one of the latter being the development of alternative schools), SEA did enjoy the administrative autonomy to implement decisions of sufficient magnitude to significantly alter the nature of public schooling. The autonomy of SEA thereby removed many of the potential barriers to change stemming from the larger school district, e.g., standardization.

Further, the decisions made in SEA were of greater significance than those typically made in public schools by parents, teachers, support staff and building administrators. Typically, central office administrators retain power over decisions about budget allocations, staffing patterns and selections, the nature and extent of inservice training, building alterations, new curriculum materials, and the basic instructional organization of teachers and pupils. These decisions were "decentralized" in the sense that they fell largely within the domain of SEA.

Within SEA, the building, or alternative school, became the unit for instructional decisions rather than centralized governance groups (Rider, 1975). Legitimacy of particular decisions at the building level was provided by political concerns among professional staff and community members across SEA. The acceptance of the decisions of others as legitimate alternatives was exchanged for approval of one's own decisions. To insure continuance of the overall structure of alternatives, it was necessary to submerge competition among alternatives and identities with one "best" alternative. Agreement was not necessary. Further, the "isolation" of alternatives by separate buildings removed the visibility of differing approaches among professional peers.

SEA also altered the structure of legitimacy, or accountability, of instructional decisions vis-a-vis a community of parents. Instructional decisions were differentially shared between the professional staff and the community of parents from alternative to alternative. Instructional decisions could be made by governance groups (parent and staff representatives) or by the professional staff alone. In either case, however, the legitimacy of those decisions could be enhanced by the rationale of choice. Decisions about instruction could be directed towards a given philosophy because parents, teachers and students were free to select other instructional alternatives. The demands to reach decisions which could satisfy a wide range of perceptions about appropriate instructional systems was reduced. The school was no longer accountable to a constant population. Two perspectives are possible on the emergent form of accountability: (1) accountability was reduced because the school could be responsive to a single philosophy and the concerns of teachers and a small group of parent representatives or (2) accountability was increased because the alternative schools had to satisfy the parent population to maintain organizational legitimacy through enrollment.

In summary, SEA was able to legitimize decisions designed to create and maintain variability vis-a-vis the Minneapolis Public Schools, professional peers and the parent community.

Resources

The magnitude of funding of the various Experimental Schools sites has often been cited as the cause of SEA's success in implementing change. We believe the dollar has been a necessary, but not sufficient, cause of change in SEA. Resources alone have not shown a significant relationship to innovation (Reynolds, 1965), and differences exist within the Experimental Schools Program in the degree of change created by the federal funding.

The effect of an influx of monies into a school district is frequently "more of the same"; that is, an increase in expenditures for equipment and materials similar to those of past programs. This result may frequently occur in "poor" districts which have lacked the resources to maintain what is perceived as a quality educational program. Therefore, substantial additions to an existing program may in itself constitute a significant change. Declining resources, as a result of declining enrollments for example, may also signal a need for funds to maintain an existing program. The avoidance of significant changes, or decreases, in the quality of a program may be a significant impact of additional funds. Minneapolis, however, faced neither situation in 1971. In fact, the state of Minnesota has one of the highest average per pupil expenditure levels in the country. Low expenditure levels may inhibit innovatory efforts (Reynolds, 1965), but this was not the history or case of Minneapolis.

The role of resources in innovation also is dependent upon both perceived need to change and power to change (Reynolds and Reynolds, 1967). If there is no need for change, then resources are likely to be spent on "more of the same." If there is need but no power, then more of the same may be the only option allowed by those who hold decision-making power. However, without financial resources, the translation of both need and power into significant change is reduced.

In SEA, increased financial resources served three purposes. One, the financial resources of SEA accelerated the pace of change. It is important to recognize that SEA was building on an earlier commitment to alternatives which, without federal funds, would have resulted in a limited trial program. The increased resources provided the means to further define and develop the alternatives so that they could become more distinct in terms of instructional materials, staffing patterns, building arrangements, support staff, staff development and evaluation services. Two, expenditure of these increased monies provided a focus for community involvement and the governance bodies of SEA; i.e., the Experimental Schools Program created a managerial overhead beyond that which would be expected in a public school program without federal program involvement. The increased monies also funded several positions, assumed by parents, to handle program management within the formal structure of SEA. The federal funding created both a need for an increase in personnel and the monies to fill that need. Three, the level of funding was beyond that available after participation in the Experimental Schools Program and continually raised the issue of survival and what would occur "after the money goes away." The longer range perspective on change in SEA may be quite different than that even at this late hour and will be further discussed in Chapter Six.

It is important to consider nonmonetary costs at the same time as monetary costs to provide a realistic perspective concerning the role of money in the development of alternative schools. Much of the SEA program was not dependent upon additional funding. For instance, new governance structures per se cost little. Community involvement is an attitude and pattern of interaction, neither of which necessarily costs additional money. A sensitivity to the affective aspects of instruction does not require new instructional materials or new buildings. While money provides visible changes in a program, the noncost factors of philosophy, attitude, and commitment give new programs their substantive changes. The noncost factors highlight the importance of the legitimacy of the change effort and the autonomy of SEA within the Minneapolis Public Schools. Other educators, were they to secure equal monies, could not be assured of achieving equally successful change.

Risk Reduction

The changes of SEA were also enhanced by a reduction in the risk associated with participation. The rationale of choice enhanced the legitimacy of different alternatives and was risk-reducing, but other factors came into play.

The risks of participating in Southeast Alternatives were small, for the district at large and for individual professional staff. Alternatives were part of a movement, in vogue and value laden. The goals of SEA were to implement alternatives, decentralize decisions, and involve the community. The "goodness" of these program components was established; there was no need to "test" them for quality in SEA. In fact, the commitment to alternative schools by the MPS and their implementation in other areas of the city has not been dependent on the completion of Southeast Alternatives.

It can be argued further that SEA was not a realistic basis for the comparison of educational programs across the city. SEA is small, its student enrollment at the time of the proposal to NIE was only four percent of that of the overall district (MPS, 1971). MPS could grant autonomy to SEA at a low level of risk, for SEA would develop programs that could not serve as models on a district-wide basis because of the unrealistic sums of money involved. The risks to teachers and administrators were not great; alternatives could be defined as best "adapted" to local needs and to local monies. The need for evaluation was thereby reduced. SEA's autonomy was reinforced; its own risks reduced.

Evaluation was a need identified by NIE, however, and internal and external evaluation teams were budgeted. As with the theme of alternatives, "evaluation" was a "good"; there was little definition required, none given. As a result, both internal and external evaluations were slow to start as they wrestled with defining their roles and whether they were to be independent or interdependent (Giannotta, 1975b:9-17). Eventually, the internal evaluation proceeded to develop its own approach independent of external evaluation. Part of internal evaluation's approach, with SEA support, was to reject the use of standardized achievement tests as appropriate evaluation approaches. Indeed, any standard evaluation criteria for all alternatives was rejected on the notion that this would lead to comparisons among alternatives and create a search for the "best" alternative and a threat to the legitimacy of the others. Internal evaluation devoted much of its effort to building-centered evaluations of specific program components which could be legitimately and comfortably changed or discontinued. Project-wide evaluations focused upon satisfaction of parents and teachers and whether attendance patterns reflected use of the alternatives. Evaluation criteria for the success of the project independent of participants did not emerge from the internal evaluation. Nor did it from the external evaluation. External evaluation eventually adopted a research orientation and moved away from a judgmental role. The criteria for success became internally defined in terms of satisfaction and the professional judgment of SEA professionals. While it may be argued that this was the best criteria to use, it is the opinion of this author that it also reduced the risks involved in participation.

Rewards

While the risks of participating in SEA have been reduced, rewards have been enhanced. While the multiple facets of the project provided different rewards to different individuals, the overall project itself was a source of reward to participants. The autonomy and funding of SEA created a temporary organization, protected subculture if you will, for a period of five years. It provided a special identity for participants and created a system of "true belief" (Smith and Keith, 1971). This identity was fostered by the contrasts perceived between SEA as a system of choice and the typical educational programs of Minneapolis and the rest of the country. SEA was on the cutting edge of educational thought and practice; it would serve as a model for the country.

This identity was reinforced by the continued stream of visitors to SEA and was reflected in SEA's commitment to dissemination. The Information Office of SEA sent literally thousands of documents across the country describing SEA in general, its specific alternatives, and various aspects of its program such as community education and evaluation. Over time these documents became more polished and won several awards in their own right. More immediate dissemination of information to the local community via a monthly newsletter also afforded positive feedback to participants. While these activities were certainly legitimate given the Experimental Schools status of SEA and the need to inform parents of educational programs, it served the needs of participants as well.

Summary and Conclusions

An underlying theme of the discussions in Chapters Two and Three has been the need to attend to the adult population of schools when attempting to change instructional programs. Need for change, power to change, resource allocations, risk reduction and rewards all focus on adults and the organizational context of adult behaviors. Proposals for change and the selection of sites for innovative programs, however, frequently emphasize the pupil and his needs to a fault, neglecting the adult and his ability and willingness to change.

Consideration of the factors discussed in the last two chapters can be made prior to the funding and initiation of change attempts. While other factors surely were involved in SEA's success, these factors seem to account for "a significant proportion of the variance." The probability of implementing alternative schools can be enhanced by:

1. Diagnosis:
    - a. Assessing organizational momentum, major problems and issues;
    - b. Identifying differences in perceived need for change;
2. Initiation:
    - c. Involving key personnel who function as planners and implementors;
3. Definition:
    - d. Avoiding specific innovations and developing definitions in terms of overall goals;
4. Implementation:
    - e. Granting power to make decisions compatible with perceived need for change;
    - f. Providing resources to operationalize change;
    - g. Reducing the risks of participation; and
    - h. Enhancing the rewards of participation.

If proposals were to specify these components as carefully as the characteristics of the student population to be served by an innovative program, successful change might not be so uncommon.

In sum, SEA was an organizational change as much as an instructional change. The parameters on the instructional variability possible within the public school setting were altered; standardization was reduced and variability became an organizational goal. In the next chapter, we will examine the extent to which the potential for alternative instructional programs actually occurred (monitoring instructional environments).

CHAPTER FOUR

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS: DIFFERENCES AMONG ALTERNATIVES

A central premise of Southeast Alternatives (SEA) has been that it is possible to create and maintain substantively different learning environments. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the instructional process of each of the four elementary alternatives to determine if they were indeed alternatives. To accomplish this purpose, we will first describe the instructional programs of each school in sufficient depth to allow the reader a sense of "what it is like" to be a teacher or pupil in each program. (To our knowledge, descriptions of the instructional programs of SEA are not detailed elsewhere.) This description will focus upon selected dimensions of classroom environments which emphasize the process of instruction. For our purposes, it has also been important to include a focus upon the ways in which the common goal of "providing quality instruction in basic skills" has been addressed by each alternative. Following the descriptions, we will examine the similarities and differences among the four elementary programs to assess the extent to which alternatives were provided by SEA.

The six dimensions selected for analysis are:

1. the dominant instructional activities in which teachers and students participate;
2. the arrangement and utilization of classroom and building space;
3. the structuring and allocation of time for daily instructional activities;
4. the physical movement and groupings of students for instruction;
5. the range of adult contacts to which students are exposed;
6. the initiation of instructional activities by different participants in the instructional process.

The concerns of this chapter are considered to be generalizable to other settings in which alternative schools may be implemented. Monitoring instructional environments—the fifth stage of the suggested model for implementing alternative schools—calls for procedures of assessing the extent to which instructional programs are congruent with overall program goals. The selected dimensions—activities, use of time, use of space, grouping, adult interaction and activity initiation—begin to identify the multiple ways in which the instructional process can vary. As in SEA, different environments can be structured to achieve similar goals (e.g., basic skills) and yet reflect different priorities (e.g., students' roles in making decisions about the instructional activities in which they engage).

The monitoring of instructional programs is an essential but frequently overlooked step in evaluating instructional programs. A major tendency in education has been to evaluate the extent to which program goals are achieved by relying exclusively upon outcome measures (standardized tests or survey of student affect) without first determining if the intended delivery system was implemented (Charters and Jones, 1973). For example, if the achievement scores of the various alternative schools were found to be similar, any number of reasons could exist for that finding. It would be possible that the alternatives were not in fact different in their instructional programs, so similar results could be expected. If differences in instructional programs were found, then similar results would have a quite different meaning. In the case of SEA, it would mean that goals for student achievement of basic skills were achieved by different instructional strategies. Further, assessing learning environments may be necessary to gauge the attainment of the program goals not readily amenable to student testing—e.g., increasing the number and types of adults interacting with students. The following analysis of the instructional environments of SEA, then, is a means of clarifying the implications of our findings in the following chapter on instructional outcomes as well as being an end in itself.

The instructional environments of SEA's elementary alternatives will be reported in three ways. First, we provide an overall description of the school, its staff and program characteristics. Second, the results of observing the instructional routine of each alternative is presented. In this section, we explore the interrelationship among six selected dimensions of instructional environments—activities, use of time, use of space, grouping, adult interaction and activity initiation. A third section—reflections—steps back from the operational data and draws upon other research to expand upon the "culture of the school." This section is organized by the six dimensions of concern.

Following the four school-specific sections, major similarities and differences among schools are presented. We close the chapter with a statement on the implications of our findings for the following chapter and its analyses.

To facilitate the readability of this chapter, we would like to take exception to our rule of avoiding methodological statements. The data and terminology used in this chapter are derived from a study conducted during the 1974-75 school year, one of several focused investigations developing out of our ethnographies of each of SEA's alternatives. The study's major purpose was to isolate major similarities and differences among the elementary alternatives (Giannotta, 1975c). One intermediate class (grades 4-6) was selected for study in each elementary school. Each class was observed for a minimum of nine hours (the base for comparisons) over a two week period. Observations were conducted from mid-April through the end of the year. Observations were standardized to reflect 470 minutes of class routine time, which included activities of a non-instructional nature. Our interest in this chapter is "class routine time observed," which will be noted as "CRTO."

Considerations in selecting classes were ease of research entry, intermediate student representation, and the instructional style of the teachers (i.e., as close to the "middle" of styles exhibited among the school's intermediate teachers, in the judgment of the author). Information from the external evaluation team's school-based ethnographies helped to judge the representativeness of selected classes. No teacher selected for study was considered "atypical." More general observations of the four alternatives provided additional perspectives on the class routines of students.

The data derived from the study of the Free School, however, are subject to caution. While it was possible to observe a "class" at the other three schools, Free School did not use classes as grouping structures. Rather, an advisor (adult)/advisee (student) system was used. Even this system, however, could not be used as a similar structure for study because members of the same advisory group did not have matching schedules. Our strategy, therefore, was to "track" an individual student. While we have included the Free School as part of this study and consider the general descriptions valid, strict comparisons with other schools should be avoided.

Data were coded in several categories within several dimensions. Grouping data were generalized into the categories "uniform" and "varied." Uniform referred to the use of a single or predominant mode of student grouping, e.g., single group, all students divided into subgroups, or all students paired. Varied referred to the simultaneous use of differing modes of grouping, e.g., some students working alone, some in pairs and some in subgroups. Categories of adults included teacher, aide, support staff (internal evaluator, social worker, counselor, community resource coordinator, curriculum specialist), volunteer or visitor. Use of space was also coded as uniform or varied. Uniform referred to a single or overwhelmingly predominant use of space by students, e.g., all sitting at desks, all sitting on floor. Varied referred to simultaneous use of more than one type of space, e.g., some walking around, some sitting, and some at desks. Activity initiation referred to those categories of persons who seem to have primary influence in initiating the activity content observed over specific time segments. It was coded as student alone, adult alone, or both student and adult. Activity content was coded in terms used either by the specific school (subjects, projects, story time) or where no school-specific terms seemed to exist, by highly specific terms selected by the observer.

Data of a narrative nature were also recorded during observation sessions, e.g., verbatim dialogue, observer's comments on points of interest, or additional information. These narrative data, combined with informal conversations with students and adults, provided additional perspectives.

Contemporary School

The Contemporary School enrolled approximately 265 students during 1974-75. As in the prior three years of the SEA project, enrollment reflected a relatively high proportion of blue collar families. Some 70% of the school's students represented the building's immediate attendance district, lending the Contemporary School a distinctively "neighborhood school" character.

In general, staff composition did not radically depart from that encountered in other public elementary schools. The principal, nine teachers, the clerk, several support staff and a number of aides were Minneapolis Public School (MPS) civil servants. Certain other staff were shared among SEA schools and paid out of federal monies or were volunteers. The majority of staff were of upper Midwest origins and female (Nelson, 1975:54).

In keeping with its alleged "traditional school" image, the Contemporary School utilized age-graded, self-contained classrooms as its primary mode of student grouping. Each class was under the charge of a teacher, assisted by other categories of paraprofessionals and support staff. Some "split" classes were also used, e.g., ones containing a mix of two age/grade levels.

The Contemporary School curriculum emphasized mastery of basic skills—reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. Instruction in each of these subjects drew upon a variety of multi-media materials. The Addison-Wesley math series provided a corpus of sequenced objectives continually assessed through use of a computerized Comprehensive Achievement Monitoring (CAM) program. The Contemporary School building was the largest of the SEA elementary facilities and included a math center with computer teletype terminals used in drill and simulation activities. Holt Databank resources, complemented by varieties of MPS materials, were used in social studies. The Contemporary School also housed both SEA-wide and MPS-wide science and environmental studies centers, rich in curricular and living plant/animal resources.

Complementing the school's basic skills emphasis were several enrichment activities and programs, including field trips, creative dance, industrial arts, and ceramics. A particularly strong Contemporary School program was its "Community School." This provided both students and adults (including senior citizens) choices among a broad range of after-school activities, crafts, and sports. Nelson (1975a) provides an ethnographic treatment of the Contemporary School program.

Observations

Of the total class routine time observed (CRTO), 85% was taken up by four major types of "basic skills": reading (26%), social studies (21%), mathematics (19%), and spelling (19%). In computing the percentages for each, reading was combined with "story" time and spelling was combined with a "writing" exercise. The remaining time consisted of art or such logistical activities as moving out of the room to an extra-classroom activity; "getting set" or preparation for a following activity (e.g., getting seated at desks, getting paper out); clean-up; or dismissal.

About half the math time observed was devoted to taking CAM tests; the other half was consumed by workbook exercises. Most of the spelling time observed was also devoted to taking written tests, which were part of the curricular materials and were turned in to the teachers for correction. Social studies activities drew upon cultural-oriented curricular packets. Discussions were in a question/answer format, with the teacher asking the class to volunteer information and opinions. Some worksheets were also distributed for completion. Reading was approached in a variety of ways. For some of the time observed, the teachers would read the class a story (a designated activity for part of the day). During other times observed, worksheets or textbook exercises were completed by the students.

A total of 80% of CRTO was devoted to activities of a uniform nature. That is, the entire class or overwhelming majority of the class were simultaneously engaged in the same activity. Some 20% of CRTO was varied in nature with different activities pursued by differing combinations of students at the same times. Both uniform and varied activities overlapped with subjects and logistical type activities, although most subject time was covered in the uniform manner.

The bulk of CRTO reflected activities which were primarily adult initiated (93%). The remaining time reflected activities which were combined adult and student initiated. During the latter types of activities, students were usually afforded the option of engaging in one of two or more types of classroom activity focused on a particular subject. An example would be a choice between writing a reading exercise, or identifying language problems in a story together with the teacher.

Turning to students' use of space, 77% of all CRTO represented uniform use. That is, all students were using the same type of space, e.g., all at desks, all on floor, all on line. Some 80% of the time devoted to subjects also reflected uniform space use. The principal—almost exclusive—mode of uniform space use was that of students seated at desks that were "theirs." All activities using uniform space were adult initiated.

All (100%) of activities observed, where uniform grouping was employed, were adult initiated. Uniform grouping made up 64% of CRTO. "Variation" consisted of a single pair of individuals. This pair consisted of the teacher helping one student, while the rest of the class worked on as a group.

For the majority (70%) of the CRTO, only one adult was present in the classroom—the teacher. The uniform tenor of grouping in general was also reflected when more than a single adult was present in the classroom. When more than one adult was in the classroom, the class worked predominantly as either a "single group" or "alone." "Single group" refers to a situation where the class was able to share somewhat while being addressed by the teacher (e.g., as in a question-and-answer session). "Alone" refers to situations where silence and minimal sharing were expected (e.g., as in taking a math test).

To summarize, the bulk of activities observed were uniform in nature and consisted of basic skills subjects. Most activities observed were teacher initiated. Grouping was primarily uniform, with the single group or alone structures most used. Students spent the majority of time observed seated at desks (uniform space use). A single adult—the teacher—was present in the room during the majority of the time observed.

The time schedule followed by the class stressed basic skill mastery. Students seemed well aware that certain times were for certain activities; the teacher's pacing generally kept things moving as well. Certain cues were used to call the group to order. In addition to school bells, these consisted of either the teacher ringing a small hand bell or simply saying something like "OK, let's go." Students usually quickly comprehended and assumed their seats. While both time and curricular activities appeared fairly consistent, it must be noted that neither was written in stone. Not all activities started and ended "on the nose"; not all curricular activities used "packaged" materials.

While the teacher was observed to have to deal with quite a number of other adults, the primary job of instruction fell upon her. For example, the aide generally corrected papers or prepared materials. Some support staff or volunteers handled individual tutoring needs. But, in general, direct instruction seemed the teacher's job, as did primary responsibility for the class. In the morning, the teacher took attendance and reviewed the day's upcoming schedule. During recess, she usually gave the class the option of staying in the room or going outside on the playground—unless she happened to be on "playground duty." Then all had to accompany her.

During the period observed, an innovation in adult-student relationships was being tried. Every adult in the school, including maintenance people, was being assigned a group of students to give students an adult other than their teacher with whom to relate. Periodic meetings were being set up for this activity.

Modes of address employed with teachers were always observed to be formal, e.g., Mr.___ or Miss___. While relations seemed well defined in terms of adult-student status, they were far from cold. In one session we watched a group of students present their aide with a quilt they had made for her; during another, warm "fuzzy-grams" were dispatched to thank a volunteer. A number of the students also appeared to have known one another for several years—a result of the Contemporary School's "neighborhood school" character.

Both students and teacher seemed well-tuned to a class routine, almost task oriented in the sense of jointly going about a job that all seemed to sense simply had to be done.

Reflections

Activities

One cultural assumption made at Contemporary School was that there was a corpus of knowledge that ought to be learned at certain times in a student's life. Item: "If you waste your 5th grade year, don't expect to work on it in the 6th grade. Spelling is something you need to work on and you know it." Another was that this knowledge corpus could be successfully taught as an identifiable series of knowledge blocks called "subjects." Still another assumption related to the mode in which subjects are taught—generally from discrete materials such as textbooks, workbooks, worksheets, media kits tackled simultaneously by the class for certain periods of time. The "long arm" of constant monitoring through objectives-referenced tests are also seen as aides to both students and teachers in identifying learning needs.

Time

Closely related to assumptions about activities are certain corollaries which relate to time. One such corollary is that there are class times allocated for certain activities that simply have to be done. Item: "You've done a tremendous job this morning. Just hang in there. We've only got a few more minutes." A related assumption is the occasional arbitrariness of time: Item: "This is as far as we got today. Close your books." Item: "Kids, we're not going to go by the clock. We're going to finish the social studies lesson even if it runs through the break." Because certain work must be covered by all during certain times, those who miss work must "make it up." Item: "Will kids who went to band please sign up for makeups?" Or: "I'd go to that activity, but you have to make up work you miss while you're at it." Also, when all work on the same thing at the same time, waiting is something one must learn to live with. Item: "If you're finished, re-check your papers."

Or: "If I let you interrupt, then I have to give other kids the same privilege; and I don't think we'll get far that way. You're fulfilling your needs but not letting the rest of us do so."

Space

As a student at Contemporary School, one has a desk. One can put his or her things in that desk. During class, one is usually expected to stay seated at it, unless the class has an activity which lets one out of it—recess, gym, listening to a story on the floor. Sometimes, one can get out if one goes up to the teacher (along with several others) and asks her questions. However, she doesn't always approve of students' doing this, especially if she's working with a student who's "turn" it is for individual tutorial work that day. Item: "Kids, I don't want you to come up to me....Your assignment is to do that page and my assignment is to work with Betty. Some people are keeping me from doing my assignment." Sometimes the teacher will call out the names of students who are out of their seats when they are not supposed to be. Lunch is one of the times one gets out of desks. Item: "OK, line up to go down to lunch."

Grouping

A key assumption is that things often need to be done _together_. When in a "whole class" group, as is often the case, one must learn to wait one's turn. Item: "We can't do anything together unless we learn to take turns." Item: "Sit down, the last thing we need is a big rush of people here. One at a time." While the teacher did try to make some materials more "individualized" so kids could move more at their own speeds, a basic assumption reflected was that such materials were appropriate for use with the whole group. The class needs to be "together" to start many activities. Item: "We have kids coming in now from three different activities and we are not together at all. I don't think we're ready to start yet."

Adults

Teachers experience interruptions by other adults as well. Sometimes a volunteer pops in; sometimes another teacher comes to ask a question; sometimes the band teacher calls some students out. The teacher is the one to ask if one wants to leave the room; get some paper; needs some directions; wants some papers corrected; wants to sign up for activities; wants to do something else. The teacher is also the person other adults seem to think should be asked if _they_ want something.

Activity Initiation

In general, the data indicated primarily adult responsibility for initiating learning activities. Student input was seen to come in the form of exercising choices among both short and long-term options. Short-term options were illustrated by students' choice between going over a story with the teacher in a small group or sitting at their desks to do a written exercise. Long-term choices were illustrated by "rotating" (among classrooms) options, e.g., choosing to attend workshops when the class's turn came up once every six weeks.

Continuous Progress School

The Continuous Progress School enrolled approximately 400 students during 1974-75, with 18% coming from non-SEA attendance areas. The heavy enrollment reflected the merger of primary (K-3) and intermediate (4-6) program components which had operated in previously separate buildings over the first three years of SEA. Continuous Progress School families represented a mixture of White middle class and minority (Black and Indian) subcultures.

Staff composition reflected a mixture of certified MPS employees, personnel whose services were separately contracted and community volunteers. The first category included the school's principal, clerical and maintenance staff, curriculum coordinator, thirteen classroom teachers, some eight aides (eventually one to each room during latter part of the year), and certain support staff (e.g., full time counselor, part time nurse, social worker, speech specialist, internal evaluator, and an SEA-wide social worker). The second category included program enrichment staff, as well as community education and volunteer program coordinators. The final category included volunteers who functioned in a variety of capacities both in and out of classrooms.

The Continuous Progress School was structured into two major ungraded K-6 units. One of these, Unit I, primarily occupied the first floor of the building, with Unit II located on the second. Each unit consisted of a team of teachers, called Team I and Team II. While the types of classroom activities were similar in each unit, their basic schedules differed in order to make most efficient use of building space, resources, and time. Classroom teachers were mostly female. For example, Team I consisted of six females and one male; Team II included five females and one male.

Like the Contemporary School, the Continuous Progress School placed emphasis upon basic skills mastery—reading, language arts activities, mathematics, social studies, and science. The April 1975 issue of Southeast Alternatives described the relationship between room assignments and reading achievement in one of the units as follows:

> Children are assigned to homerooms according to reading achievement. Following the American Book Company reading curriculum, each unit has children at all 13 levels (A-L plus Contracts). With six teachers and usually four reading groups in each room, the "average" situation would be to have "F" reading, for example, taught in two rooms per unit. But since the reading achievements of 220 children won't follow a tidy mathematical pattern, sometimes there may be enough "F" readers for only one group, yet enough "H" readers for three groups. Many other reading materials are used for supplemental activities, enrichment and independently contracted assignments.

Equally particularized was the Continuous Progress School's Individualized Mathematics System (IMS) curriculum, which was divided into eleven topics (e.g., numeration to geometry) with each topic further subdivided into nine levels of difficulty. Seven major instructional modes were used in the IMS (e.g., students' writing prescriptions, correcting their skill folders, concrete materials). Placement tests were used for both the reading and math curricula described.

Physical building space was accommodated to both math and reading curricula. For example, an IMS math center was attended by students a minimum of three days a week. On the other two days, math was covered in homerooms. A "Castle Room" housed the basic language arts materials.

Related to the basic skills emphases were a variety of additional activities. Perhaps the biggest additional activity were the Continuous Progress School's Interest Groups, some of which were related to basic skills. These were generated from lists of topics sent home to families of all students and offered for two-week periods of 45 minutes a day (except Tuesdays). Unit I Interest Group offerings for the period observed included cursive writing, optics, photography, chorus and independent study. Samples of Unit II Interest Group offerings included line and design, stories, beginning electricity, math, woodworking, and independent study. Students selected a topic which interested them; if no selection was made, they were assigned to an interest group for the two week period. The Interest Groups were taught by teachers and volunteers. A Free Choice hour occurred once every two weeks and was similar to the Interest Group in basic structure.

In addition to Interest Groups, which utilized varieties of school space, other non-classroom activities and spaces included a media center and an art room called HeARTland, unique to Continuous Progress School, staffed by an art teacher. Field trips and use of hall space for instructional purposes added to ways physical space was used. Students' days normally began with homeroom meetings for informational, planning, and problem solving purposes. They usually ended the day in the homeroom for "wrap-up"'activities. Between the "kick-off" and "wrap-up" times, students moved (both physically and cognitively) through two major activity blocks—basic skills and interest groups, accented by additional activities. French and Reynolds (1975) provide a more detailed analysis of the Continuous Progress School.

Our observations focused upon a Unit II class of 29 students which spanned four "grade levels" in the traditional sense. These consisted of 3 third graders, 6 fourth graders, 14 fifth graders, and 6 sixth graders. Though the term "grade" was not used, students generally resonded quickly when asked about it and knew what it meant! The group consisted of 17 boys and 12 girls.

Observations

Five main segments consumed total class routine time observed (470 minutes): subjects (33%); feelings and behaviors (24%); interest groups (17%); logistics of movement, preparations, or recess-type activities (17%) such as breakfast (i.e., a breakfast snack served in the classroom). Types of basic skills subjects observed encompassed language arts activities, social studies, and mathematics. Language arts included, for example, "sentence dictation," which entailed actual dictation as well as the grammatical analysis of sentences. Social studies activities observed included a guest speaker's film and lecture on African culture. Mathematics instruction observed included a lesson in "practical math," during which the teacher distributed packets of various candies and asked students to compute their prices.

The category coded as "feelings and behaviors" refers to two major types of observed activity. The first consisted of a discussion between class and teacher of appropriate student behavior, as well as an actual disciplinary action administered to the class by the teacher. The second types of activity in this category consisted of use of a television series, designed to increase students' awareness and analytical skills related to interpersonal relations. After watching the program, a worksheet was distributed to the class and a discussion of certain themes was held.

The next two categories, "interest groups" and "logistics," represented 34% of CRTO between them (17% each). Both also entailed a considerable amount of movement on the part of the students.

The final category, "art and drama," was represented entirely by either student teachers or volunteers from the community. More accurately, the drama component might be represented as the class providing an opportunity for practice teaching to two student teachers from a local university. The activity consisted of the student teachers actually assuming charge of the class for a period of impromptu "plays" created on the spot by the class. The class was also given an assignment ("draw a figure of a person....") to be completed later in the day. The art component observed was also the work of local community resources—students from SEA's Junior/Senior High School. The students displayed a film on a then-current exhibition at the Walker Art Center. The students were involved in an Urban Arts program, which involved contacts with schools. Both art and drama activities had been arranged through the community resource coordinator at the Continuous Progress School.

Almost three quarters (68%) of CRTO represented activities which were uniform in nature, with either the total or an overwhelmingly majority of the class engaged in the same activity at the same time. Slightly over three-fourths (77%) of CRTO represented adult initiated activities. The remaining 24% of CRTO represented activities initiated through combined adult and student input, with some elements of student choice. All (100%) uniform activities observed were adult initiated.

Again, as was the case with the Contemporary School program, the fact that no solely student initiated activities were observed during our study does not, and should not be taken to, mean that none existed at the Continuous Progress School. However, the distributions of activity initiation indicated in the above results should serve to give the reader some idea of relative emphases observed. (A methodological note on coding is also in order here. The mere fact that some element of student choice existed, as in such activities as Interest Groups, was not in itself considered sufficient to code as "solely student initiated." What was considered crucial was the initiation source of an activity's actual content, combined with the element of choice.)

Over half (60%) of CRTO represented uniform space use. The bulk of this time consisted of situations where students were seated at six to seven tables spread around the classroom. Some 71% of total subject time observed represented uniform space use, with 87% of the behavior/feelings time similarly represented.

Almost all (97%) of total uniform space use activities observed reflected adult initiated activities. Over half (53%) of varied space use activities observed consisted of joint adult and student initiated activities.

Some 65% of CRTO represented situations where uniform grouping was employed. Although the class was distributed into a number of groups seated at the various tables, uniform grouping was used since the "single group" was addressed as a unit or students were expected to work "alone." Almost three-fourths (74%) of total subject time observed mirrored uniform grouping, with 100% of total uniform grouping situations observed reflected adult initiated activities, though not all adult initiated activities were of the uniform grouping type.

The concentration of adults in the room during observations was heavy. During 96% of CRTO, more than one adult was in the room. For 57% of CRTO, more than two adults were present; for 25% of CRTO, more than three adults. For 3% of CRTO, only the teacher was in the room. On some 68% of the occasions when more than one adult was in the classroom, uniform grouping modes were employed.

To summarize, the majority of CRTO consisted of activities which were uniform in nature. These activities included instruction in basic skills subjects (highest frequency), as well as time devoted to four other categories: feelings and behavior; interest groups; logistics of activity preparation and transition; and accommodation of student teachers in art and drama. Most activities observed were adult initiated. Grouping was primarily uniform, with the single group or alone structures most used. Students spent the bulk of observed in-classroom time seated at tables or in chairs (uniform space use). However, almost one-fifth of CRTO was marked by a good deal of student movement between locations and activities. During the majority of the time observed, more than one adult was present in the room.

Students appeared attuned to the basic schedule of the class, able to "rattle it off" when asked. Though not as frequent as at the Contemporary School, the class was usually doing what they "should be" according to their weekly schedule. The weekly schedule, however, was just that—weekly. While the overall structure of time into basic skills and interest groups remained the same, the specific content of certain blocks in that structure were planned on a weekly basis by the teacher.

A variety of means were used to demarcate time periods and activities. In addition to school bells, the teacher would sometimes announce, "Castle Time, who's signed up for that?" In calling the class to order, certain cues were used. At times, the teacher would hold up her hand. At other times, the class itself would start counting. "One-Two-Three...." until all were silently in their seats.

The interrelationships among time, space, and activities in the Continuous Progress School cannot be overemphasized. Because of heavy enrollments, an attempt to efficiently use available space, the individualized nature of the program and the multiple goals being attempted (basic skills and interest groups), the Continuous Progress School was almost constantly "on the move." Halls were rarely empty. They were usually "fair game" as instructional space, in addition to serving as thoroughfares for a considerable stream of traffic headed in several directions. Further, one had to consider the fact that "homerooms" became other students' "classrooms" at designated times. Teachers had to be acutely aware of this as they moved through lessons. A time came each day when their room would soon by emptying and refilling with new faces.

Students were usually under the supervision of at least one, if not more, adults. This supervision included time spent on the playground or lunch periods.

Adults were usually addressed as Miss___ or Mr.___. Within class, as noted, students were usually seated at six round tables. Tables were numbered and often addressed by number. Each student knew his/her assigned table, often going to seats in the same "spots" at the table. In contrast to the Contemporary School, students did not have a personal turf called a desk. Lockers in the hall were used to store personal belongings, as no cloakroom was available in the room.

We saw a great number of adults entering students' days and activities. Yet, it was clear that primary responsibility for the class fell upon the teacher. It was she who called the group to order in the morning, took attendance, discussed lesson plans for the day, checked to see if assignments to math, reading, and other groups for the day were correct, and generally acted as a transmitter of information from other sources to students. It was also she who supervised and coordinated the work of other adults who entered the room—student teachers, volunteers, aides. The bulk of tasks performed by volunteers and aides related to correcting papers; collating and preparing materials for distribution to students; circulating about the room to give individual students requesting it some help; or simply getting the students lined up, out the door, and sometimes down the hall to another activity quietly as a group. Excepting the community resources, most direct instruction observed—adult to a class as a group—was conducted by the teacher rather than an aide or volunteer.

Students were called individually by their first names and identified themselves as "being in" their teacher's "room." While some had "had" the teacher last year, many were totally new—both to the room and each other. Problems of interpersonal behavior within the class were regarded by the teacher as group problems, to be worked out within the group. Despite the daily dispersion through the building, a definite identity as a class existed.

Reflections

Activities

As at the Contemporary School, the Continuous Progress School seemed to share the assumption that there were certain kinds of knowledge appropriate for students to master. Part of this knowledge included the basic skills, organized into discrete subjects such as reading, mathematics, and social studies. Not all skill learning was restricted to formal classroom or material-referenced instruction. The Interest Groups could hopefully "integrate" the basic skills by providing practical opportunities to see them in action or use them. A key Continuous Progress School assumption was that all students need not be working through the same materials at the same time, particularly with such systems as the IMS Math. Classroom sessions observed, however, did not always correspond to the above assumption.

Another Continuous Progress School assumption was that multiple-goals should be operationalized in attempts to satisfy the multiple needs and interests of students. The Interest Group program formed a considerable part of this program. Related to that assumption was a belief that kids could and should feel good about themselves and school. A definite stress on how kids were "feeling" or "feeling about things" was observed. This assumption was nevertheless paralleled by another, also shared with the Contemporary School program. This was the need for constant supervision and monitoring, with some of the responsibility placed upon the student. Both the IMS and reading programs kept detailed records of where students were or were heading. This information influenced initial student grouping into homeroom assignments.

Time

Both students and adults (teacher, aide, volunteers) seemed acutely aware of time. This sometimes appeared rather arbitrary from students' perspectives, despite the adult importance attached to it. Item: "We're going to sit. If we have to sit until 3:30, we will!" In a situation where certain activities (gym or recess) were denied, students too were acutely aware of time.

Space

Time assumed additional importance in a program that ultimately depended upon detailed planning, coordination, and dovetailing of multiple groups and activities in a single building. Two teams of teachers and students had to master the intricacies of cooperation by being at the right place at the right time.

Grouping

The Continuous Progress School use of ungraded class groups was naturally tied to a cross-age grouping model. While school literature promoted cross-age teaching opportunities that accompany this model, little was observed during in-class phases of the study. What was observed, relative to classroom grouping, was an emphasis on uniform grouping, i.e., one mode of grouping for certain activities. It should be remembered, however, that the Continuous Progress School programs in math and reading exposed students to a variety of peers of other ages and other classrooms.

Adults

The number and kinds of adults with whom students come in contact was impressive. Adult roles, however, were clearly defined with the teacher at the center of responsibility. In addition to fulfilling a role of traffic and activity manager, the teacher also seemed to be the principal stocker, supplier, and dispenser of materials for in-class work: paper, sometimes pencils, worksheets, newspapers, and the like.

Expectations for appropriate student behavior were clear and were repeatedly clarified. Item: "Anyone who can't walk through the hall without talking, stays in the room!" Or: "I think it'd really be a feather in your cap if you could learn to just sit, without having all this motion." Learning to take one's turn was considered equally critical. Item: "One person is going to talk, raise your hand!" A final expectation was for students to be generally "happy" and "feel good about" school, as noted above. Indications to the contrary usually led to attempts through group discussion to "get problems out into the open."

Activity Initiation

Generally, basic skills activities were initiated by adults. Interested groups were initiated through both adult and student input. Others reflected student assignments to certain tasks by various categories of adults who crossed their paths. The schedule was necessary; it was also created by adults. During one classroom situation, where a departure from the schedule came up, one student asked the teacher: "What do we do now?" This does not mean that student initiation within activities did not exist (e.g., making what one pleased in pottery). It is to say that the content of most activities reflected primarily adult or combined adult/student input.

Open School

The Open School enrolled approximately 335 students during 1974-75. Enrollments have increasingly reflected non-SEA families. The Open School had higher proportions of these in comparison to the other elementary programs. During the fourth year of SEA, a proportionately greater number of primary aged students (particularly 5-year olds) were enrolled.

Open School staff, like the two schools previously described, was composed of three major categories—MPS certified employees, SEA-wide and contracted staff and volunteers. The first category included ten classroom teachers (six primary and four intermediate) as well as two special education teachers. Others in this category included the principal; clerical, maintenance, and health staff; social worker; aides; curriculum specialists; counselor; librarian; and physical education teacher. The second category included two internal evaluators; a community resource coordinator; industrial arts and pottery teacher; aides; and a community day developer. Some individuals in category one (curriculum specialists and the social worker) were SEA-wide in assignment. The final category included varieties of individuals—parents, students, student-teachers—who performed a wide range of functions (field trip accompaniment, tutoring and teaching of mini-courses).

The program stressed the structuring of instruction around children's interests as a primary goal. Basic skills such as language arts and math formed part of the Open School program, but were not necessarily taught only as separate "subjects." Varieties of projects and activities were used as vehicles for acquiring such skills. "Process as content" and "problem-solving" approaches were also stressed. Student affect concerning peers and school, as well as the use of the community as a learning resource, were additional program goals.

The Open School was organized into paired classrooms called "families." Each family was a unit of two or four classrooms including connecting hall space. Age spans within each room generally reflected a three-year spread. No "grade" designations were used, though students invariably seemed to know their equivalent grade levels when asked.

The Open School was housed in a relatively old building, refurbished to suit program needs at the start of SEA. The basement contained an industrial arts room, a pottery, and a gym which doubled as a lunchroom. A media center was located on the first floor.

Although the schedule of daily and weekly activities reflected variation, time was generally categorized into three major segments. The first consisted of group meetings for planning, information, and general sharing purposes. The second consisted of "project times" during which individual or small group interests were pursued. The third was "quiet time," during which basic skills activities were pursued. These blocks of time varied in both sequence and length from family to family. However, a general school-wide schedule did exist which usually included times for going to interest centers, on field trips, or to gym and the media center (which provided teacher preparation time).

Two community learning programs were particularly strong at the Open School. The first consisted of a "community day" program (staffed by a full-time coordinator and part-time evaluator, assisted by volunteers). The community day enabled students from one or two rooms on a designated day of the week to go out into the community for experiences related to their normal classroom activities. It also was designed to provide sharing time for teachers. Patton (1975b) provided a complete description of the community day program. A second program was "Other People, Other Places" (OPOP), staffed by both the Community Day and Community Resource Coordinators. It enabled students to initiate community contacts, "line-up" activities and resources by phone, and help plan the needed logistics. Considerable volunteer assistance was required to effectively operate the community day, OPOP and field trip experiences.

Each classroom was designed to provide multiple areas for multiple purposes. Rooms were usually divided into a carpeted area, for group meetings and activities, as well as several other spaces divided by varying types of partitions. Quiet areas and areas for "messy projects" were common. Desks were rare. If present at all, there were usually a few pushed against walls. Tables of varying heights, plastic whistle chairs, pillows, or ordinary chairs were far more common. Flexible use of space characterized each room, with periodic rearrangement a common experience.

For greater depth on the above and other aspects of the Open School's programmatic development, the reader should consult the works of Giannotta (1975a), Olson and Patton (1975), Olson (1974), and Aldrich and Bounds (1973).

The classroom selected for study was an intermediate group consisting of 33 students. It included 10 fourth graders, 13 fifth graders, and 10 sixth graders; these were divided into 22 boys and 11 girls.

Observations

Total class routine time observed (CRTO) fell into three major categories—projects (76%), circle or meeting times (20%) and clean-up activities (4%). Projects were coded into three major types: general projects (53% of CRTO), math projects (16% of CRTO) and language arts projects (13% of CRTO). The groupings are arbitrary and not exclusive. For example, general projects fequently included use of "basic skills," sometimes in a rather direct manner, e.g., reading a book! A sampling of some of the general projects observed (several of which ran over several days) included sewing, cooking, building a rocket, drawing, working on a school newspaper, playing games, or rehearsing for a play. Some 70% of CRTO reflected varied activities—several different activities going on in the room at the same time. In terms of activity initiation, CRTO broke down into student initiated activities (33%), adult initiated activities (30%) and joint adult/student initiated activities (37%).

All (100%) of uniform activities observed were adult initiated. Of varied activities observed, 47% were student initiated and 53% joint adult/student initiated. Of total projects observed, 44% were student initiated, 7% were adult initiated, and 49% were joint adult/student initiated.

Varied space use predominated in both total activities and projects observed, with 79% of CRTO reflecting varied space use and 75% of total projects observed reflecting similar use. All (100%) of circle time reflected uniform space use, with students usually seated in a semi-circle on the carpeted area of the floor. Varied space use typically included use of several areas of the room with student positioning in those areas differing, e.g., seated on floor, on or in a large wooden cube, at tables, in a "closet" used for quiet work, or in the hall.

All (100%) of uniform space use observed reflected adult initiated activities, e.g., meetings. Varied space use observed reflected a greater spread in activity initiation—42% student initiated, 47% adult/student initiated, and 11% adult initiated.

The predominant mode of grouping observed in CRTO was varied in nature, i.e., some students working alone, others working in pairs, others in small groups. It was also varied in a literal sense, i.e., it seemed to constantly fluctuate both within and between activities. During some projects, some students would move from working alone to a small group. At times they might remain with the group for the rest of the activity or move to another grouping mode. Other students remained in their "initial" grouping structure for the duration of an activity. Few restraints seemed to be placed upon the flux during most projects. Of CRTO, 79% reflected such varied grouping, almost always involving the simultaneous use of all three major sub-types—students alone, students in pairs, students in groups.

Almost all (99%) of projects observed reflected varied grouping. All (100%) of circle time observed reflected uniform grouping—students addressed as a class. All (100%) uniform grouping observed was adult initiated. However, not all adult initiated activities utilized uniform grouping. All (100%) student initiated activities reflected varied grouping.

During 82% of CRTO, more than one adult was present in the room. For some 40% of CRTO, more than two adults were present, with some 31% reflecting the presence of more than three adults. Generally, these adults consisted of the teacher, an aide and student teachers, with some support staff and visitors also represented. Some 16% of CRTO reflected the presence of visitors. Visitors continued to be a common occurrence at the Open School, requiring the services of the community resource coordinator to avoid over-imposition upon both students and staff.

As previously noted, each room's schedule varied within the overall school schedule of activities (pottery, industrial arts, gym, media, or community programs). In addition, certain days were set aside to concentrate on different tasks, e.g., Mondays for general "catching up" on activities of the previous week; Tuesdays for flexible use of time (because these were shorter school days) in meetings discussing current events; Wednesdays for math; Thursdays for creative writing; and Fridays for reading. This does not mean that these activities were done only on those days, but rather were given particular attention on them.

Also as previously noted, activities, to the maximum extent possible, were structured around student interests. It was considered important for students to both clarify such interests and take responsibility for following through on them. Varieties of techniques were used to monitor clarification and follow-through. During circle meetings, the teacher would usually go around the room making sure each student had something he or she would be doing for designated parts of the day. For students who requested them, contracts were used. Curricular materials ran a broad gamut—"packaged" materials and workbooks; mini-packs of activities in language and math; student generated materials; or adult-made resources such as a job application form to a hypothetical company. Adults usually functioned as resources. Any adult was fair game for students to either display activities or ask assistance. The task of general adult management placed upon the teacher was great, when augmented by the additional roles of materials producer, question answerer, paper corrector, information disseminator, and attendance taker. Certain tasks were designated as primarily student responsibilities—watering plants, feeding animals, cleaning cages, and generally maintaining the room's order (a vital factor when different activities follow upon one another).

The classroom invariably was a busy place, particularly during project times. Some students might be coming and going from centers; other would be shifting groupings or perhaps activities. When other adults were in short supply, it was not too difficult a task for students who wished to do so to "escape" activities and/or monitoring of them. A good deal of responsibility seemed placed upon them to do what they committed themselves to do.

Certain times seemed fairly fixed—lunch, recess, center times, or teacher prep-times when all were expected to head for centers. Normally, centers were available to students on a daily basis. Field trips, OPOP, and community days were planned together, with the onus of initiation mainly upon students.

Adults either worked directly with individual students or groups or on other tasks—such as materials preparation or general supervision. For some activities, adults would suggest particular tasks. The teacher, for example, asked during math projects for a group interested in working on fractions. For other activities, the general content was suggested: "OK, time for math projects" and the specifics were left to students to select. For still others, initiation was totally student generated.

Reflections

Activities

In contrast to the Contemporary School and Continuous Progress School programs, the Open School did not regard appropriate student learning solely as the mastery of discrete bodies of content knowledge called "subjects." Classroom instruction reflected discernible assumptions regarding student learning in general and appropriate roles for adults in enhancing learning. The use of student interests as a primary referent assumed that such interests would provide sufficient motivation for follow-through on projects. This would make learning both more immediate and real. Processes observed also reflected the assumption that students could, with adult guidance, assume responsibility for a good deal of their time (and its use) in school. Such an assumption also extended to community based learning activities. The initiation of OPOP and community day was left mainly to students.

These assumptions did not necessarily eliminate the use of "packaged" curricula as learning referents. They merely redefined the roles such materials could play. They served as but another tool. They were not necessarily seen as the only tool for all students.

Time

While we saw the use of major time blocks for major activities, time units frequently overlapped. During the same time segment, multiple activities were often occurring. Variation was tolerated in the amounts of time students opted to spend on projects. Not all "marched to the same drummer." Again, as noted, this did not mean that there were not times when all worked on the same activity. Usually, however, if students "finished early," they moved on to something else.

Space

The deployment of space was designed to encourage multiple use as well as sharing. Physical space and student positioning and posturing reflected an almost relaxed atmosphere. Nobody seemed "uptight" if one chose to do one's reading on a ladder (actually observed). This particular room began the year almost bare. Its appearance assumed increasingly richer tones—more structures, materials, and changed frequently. Most of the structures were initiated and erected by students.

Personal space, however, was at a premium. For students, a cart of bins was about the extent of it, in addition to student lockers. A frequent situation for teachers was to have five or six students around the teacher's desk (in a corner), bombarding the teacher with requests for help, directions, information. High patience levels were a must for both students and teachers.

Grouping

Perhaps the hardest thing to record during observations was the patterns of grouping in use. It seemed to constantly change, often in the space of minutes. Most kids worked in groups (in terms of absolute numbers). Sharing was generally not only permitted, but encouraged. Talking was generally permitted. It dovetailed with the assumption that kids can, will, and should learn from other kids and with other kids.

Routines and cues were part of operationalizing all of the above assumptions. Item: "Okay, circle up." (School bell rang, but only rarely seemed to signal many of the activities observed.) There were "rules" for centers—so many to a center to avoid overcrowding; sign-ups for centers; kids' "turns" at various logistical tasks. Groups often started with only a few interested students but it was "okay" for others to join in.

Adults

As noted, adults were generally fair game for asking help, checking work, or displaying work. Adults were people who made sure things were running smoothly. Item: "Anyone with nothing to do?" They were also people who helped line-up field trips or provide tutoring or joined in attending mini-courses. Adults were frequent visitors, who asked questions about the Open School, what one did, whether one chose to do it and a seemingly endless list of other topics.

Activity Initiation

At the Open School, activity initiation was almost equally divided among adults, students and adult/student types. A norm existed for student decision making and "choosing not to choose" was not an option. Item: "If you have nothing to do, see me."

Free School

During 1974-75 the Free School enrolled approximately 150 K-12 students. Enrollments reflected the highest percentages of both non-SEA and single-parent families among the SEA elementary schools. The student population was a heterogeneous one, representing a wide range of ethnic, residential, and income backgrounds. While the Open School reflected a discernible philosophy of learning with roots in such sources as developmental work of Piaget or British integrated day schools, the Free School could most generally be described as "relating to" a mix of humanistic and radical social reform movements. Its seemingly peculiar positioning within a bureaucratic hierarchy of an urban public school system deserves some explanation.

In contrast to the three schools thus far described, the Free School was created "from scratch" as a public school with SEA's first year of funding. It began year one of SEA with 70 students. By the start of year four, enrollments were at 150. From its inception, the school experienced problems on several fronts. One was physical facilities. For its first three years it was located in rented quarters (a refurbished church) ill suited to the Free School program. Another was staffing. The SEA proposal had limited the allocation of paid staff positions. Several staff were either new or non-certified, hired on short-term contracts.

By year four, some changes were evident. The Free School had moved to new quarters (the former site of the Continuous Progress School's intermediate component). The new building was a welcome change, generally more spacious and well-lit. During year four staff represented a rather young group (most under 30, as in previous years). The Free School staff was a mix of MPS, SEA-wide or school-specific, and volunteer categories—as found in other SEA schools. However, relatively larger proportions of contract or volunteer people were reflected on its staff. The school did have a principal, though towards the close of year four his contract was not renewed due to failure to qualify for recertification under MPS guidelines.

The Free School was organized into three major programs: primary (with five to eight/nine year olds); middle (with nine to twelve/thirteen year olds); and secondary (with fourteen to eighteen year olds). Each program was ungraded.

Each program generally had certain activities, space, and staff peculiar to itself. However, all also overlapped in all three areas at times. Enrollment figures at Free School seemed to be consistent along only one dimension—their constantly fluctuating and elusive nature. However, during the latter part of year four, reasonably reliable figures indicated 31 students in the primary, 48 in the middle, and 65 in the secondary programs.

Grouping was framed around the use of advisor (adult)/advisee (student) relationships. At the beginning of a school year, each staff person (including clerical) was assigned as an advisor for one of the three programs. The advisor was expected to help students plan their activities, do some monitoring in the form of written progress reports, and record at least one parent conference a year.

Time at Free School generally fell into three major categories (under ideal conditions). Considerable variation within, and overlapping among, these categories existed by age group. The three categories were (1) academic activities, (2) electives and (3) use of resource areas such as shop, gym, music and art rooms.

Turning specifically to the middle program, planning was done on a trimester basis and involved the use of two types of schedules. The first trimester began in the fall, the second around Christmas, and the third around Easter. Each trimester, a general schedule of courses, activities and events projected as available was designed. Working from this schedule, an advisee would plan out his/her individual schedule. A general ground rule seemed to be that one had to plan a minimum of four hours weekly class time for language arts and math activities. Though several students might have the same advisor, their individual schedule could and often did look very different.

What was the "curriculum" at Free School? There were no neatly packaged objectives or standardized curricular series that one might point to as forming the core of the Free School curriculum. Much like the Open School, learning was seen as best generated from student interests. It stressed process-oriented learning, in addition to acquiring the basic skills in an "integrated curriculum" fashion of "real-life" learning. In addition, it had definite philosophic overtones mirroring a melange of counter-culture thrusts (e.g., "survival skills") and social reform (e.g., "anti-facist"). The curriculum is summarized by an article from the April 1975 issue of the SEA newspaper:

> The school considers that choice making by students is basic to good learning and essential to adult responsibility. It accepts student interest as a legitimate starting point for all learning and gives students freedom to pursue that interest wherever it leads.
>
> Free School encourages students to involve themselves directly with issues of reform and change in all institutions of society. Its ideal graduates are not those who can smoothly "fit in," but women and men who will make their communities more just.

Our contextual summary has been highly selective. For a fuller description of the Free School, the reader is referred to the works of Reaves (1975), Nelson et al. (1975), and Winther (1975).

Observations

The majority (79%) of activities observed were varied in nature. These activities fell into six major categories: music-related activities (38%); language puzzles and games (23%); math (16%); moving about the building and chatting with peers (14%); conferring with advisor (6%); and in pottery (3%).

During the periods of time observed, some 80% of activities were student initiated. The remainder reflected joint student/adult initiated enterprises. Almost all (88%) of varied activities observed were student initiated. Over half (55%) of uniform activities observed were student initiated; some 35% were adult initiated.

It is important to note that activities observed did not necessarily correspond to those listed on the student's individual schedule. Scheduled activities were often a hit or miss affair, for a variety of reasons. Daily monitoring by adults of what students did seemed an inappropriate expectation. It was expected that the student would assume sufficient responsibility in programming her activities. Also related to this situation were two additional factors: (1) not all centers could be expected to be open or necessarily contain activities on the "master" schedule, nor could the several adults "manning" them always be expected to be present, and (2) sometimes ad hoc activities would be generated, which took precedence over previously scoped ones. The first factor was related partly to variable and insufficient staffing of some rooms/activities. It also reflected a situation which arose during the period of study—namely, a field trip to Washington, D.C. This trip had drawn off roughly half of the middle students and several staff whose centers/rooms remained empty.

Reeves (1975:31) isolated several common characteristics among the varying ways middle students spent the day:

- Collecting friends. (This may occur in the bus on the way to school, in the hall before school starts, or in the first room the student goes to at 9:15.)
- At some time in the course of the day the student will go with friends to the corner store for a snack.
- At some time the student will spend from ten minutes to two hours in the math room.
- Slightly more than half the students will spend some time in the gym, up to an hour each time.
- Most students will spend some portion of the day socializing—in the hall, the community resource room or outside in warm weather.
- Most, but not all, will spend some time in the room of their choice on a project—in the science room tending plants or animals; in the media center sewing or reading; in the art room exploring techniques or materials; in the shop making a boat, a box, a wood sculpture or a beautifully laminated boomerang; or in a class in the middle room.
- Most will spend some time wandering around, complaining of boredom in the office, in the hall, or in any of the rooms.

Over the course of our study, almost all of the above activities were observed. Adults also played key roles in curriculum formulation. Over the summer of 1974, a curriculum writing group generated a range of short and long-term activities that would be offered the coming year (Reeves, 1974:45). Some samples: Competencies or values—anti-sexist, anti-racist attitudes; Women in Art, Sports, Science and Medicine and Politics; Botany, Biology, Ecology, Gross Earth Systems.

While a list of graduation requirements did exist at Free School, Reeves found that 15 of 17 older middle students interviewed had never seen a copy of them. The area students seemed most aware of was math. Math at Free School was offered in a room designated for that purpose and staffed by a teacher with volunteer help. It was one of the more highly organized parts of the curriculum—with specific objectives specified; materials (including computer use) keyed to objectives; and individualized packets of work materials kept in folders for each student.

The dominant mode of space utilization observed was varied (68%), though some activities reflected uniform use as well (e.g., sitting with band). Though most math activities observed reflected similar use of space (73%), it seemed not to matter if some students chose to work in varied locations (e.g., not all sitting at tables). They were also observed to do so. Some 78% of total varied space use observed reflected student initiated activities. A typical example was time spent in the media center, where some students would be sewing, others working on games/puzzles, still others reading.

Varied grouping modes predominated during observations. They represented 79% of CRTO. As our student moved within such areas as the media center, or in the music room, the modes of grouping reflected generally were the "working alone, while others worked in pairs or small groups." Some work was done with adults, e.g., receiving tutoring from a volunteer in techniques of guitar playing. Other work, such as solving word puzzles, were done while sharing with one or two other students. Quite a bit of time observed was spent working alone. Grouping, with the exception of some time spent in band, seemed almost student initiated. Some 87% of total varied grouping time observed reflected student initiated activities. Almost 90% of math time mirrored varied grouping—with some students working alone, others in pairs or with the teacher.

Over half of CRTO (63%) involved activities where one adult was present in the room. Roughly 20% of CRTO was spent in activities where more than one adult was present; 17% of CRTO represented situations with no adult present. During slightly over one-fourth (26%) of observed occasions where more than one adult was present, uniform grouping was used (e.g., a band concert for visitors to the school).

To summarize, space, grouping, and activities overwhelmingly reflected varied modes—simultaneous use of multiple spaces, combinations of people, and activities. Generally, situations where one adult was present predominated. These adults included volunteers, aides, or teachers. Free School distinctions among these categories did not seem to "matter" very much to students. Activities observed were primarily student initiated.

Reflections

Activities

One premise of Free School was that "appropriate learning" ought to be heavily student-referenced in its definition and operationalization. Another premise viewed learning as the acquisition of tools for promoting change in a society viewed as often hostile and greatly in need of change. Item: a math exercise that used credit card ripoffs to teach computational skills. Varieties of posters, signs and announcements pasted on walls in the halls announced counter-cultural types of events considered of interest. Responsibility for oneself was stressed in addition to commitment to social action. Students engaged in differing activities while in the same physical locations at the same time and initiated activities which carried into the community.

Time

Time at Free School was characterized by an ad hoc unpredictability. Item: "Not too many students around today, probably because it's rainy." Or: "Not too many kids here since it's so sunny today." Activities observed generally were of the type "I guess I'll go...or do...now." Yet, some activities were pre-planned, e.g., appointments with volunteer for guitar lesson or with band instructor for rehearsal. Some activities seemed planned almost "on the spot," such as a field trip decided upon in the hall one morning.

Starting times were simply things one could not "count on" at Free School. Item: "It took us a million years to go on one camping trip. We were supposed to leave at nine and left at lunch."

Again, basic responsibility for time was placed upon students. Item: "You have to put in four hours on skills when you make the schedule. Sometimes I don't go to some of the stuff I put down." Free School required a good degree of tolerance for ambiguity.

Space

Students were free to wander about and check out various spots both within and beyond building confines. Multiple space use predominated. Item: "I'm going home." Space and time use were closely related. Both were subject to occasional traffic. Item: (Poking head in door) "Anyone in here interested in a bikathon to raise money?" Or: "Anyone seen some primary kids come through here?" Or: "Sometimes kids just give up and stop coming when nobody shows." Or: "Sometimes adults give up after waiting so often, nobody showing, or seeing them all out playing ball on a nice day."

Grouping

Students worked with older or younger peers or with varieties of adults in an out of the school (e.g., an internship in a) community agency. Groups formed, dissolved, and restructured themselves according to individual needs, desires, or activities.

Adults

As at the Open School, adults at Free School were addressed informally, usually by first name. Some adults seemed more "uptight" than others about certain things. Item: "He fines us ten cents if we're late." Several adults offer things "they're into" for us. Item: "I learned a lot about the establishment and the CIA, but not too much else in that one." Some adults seem more "together" than others.

There were rules. Most of them related to learning not to bother others or property, or how to take care of oneself. Item: A sign detailed rules for lunch such as no shoving in line or throwing food. At the end of the year, one can expect to meet with one's advisor, who has all the cards from teachers whose classes have been attended. Value is placed on information which shows that one has assumed responsibility and followed through on attendance and activities. Item: "You haven't been like so many other kids who don't come or slack off and fool around all day." Or: "Kids move on from program to program when they think they're ready for it." Or: "Attendance figures tell a lot at Free School since basically we don't require them to come." Or: "Figures, I'm told, are sometimes taken by teachers impressionistically." Attendance was always tricky at Free School. Some secondary students, for example, worked part-time and hence were not present for all classes. Other students sometimes had to return home to attend to family matters.

Activity Initiation

Students are expected to be an agent responsible for their own learning. Item: "Nobody's gonna tell you what to do." Or: "I do them (i.e., math exercises) not because I have to. If I don't, I won't learn."

SEA as a System of Alternatives

The purpose of this section is to discuss the similarities and differences among the elementary alternatives of SEA. To accomplish this end, we will not only draw from the data presented in the preceding, school-specific sections, we will also examine several other "models" for comparing school programs and discuss the external (SEA-wide, MPS and state) influences on the four alternatives. These other sources of comparison may provide the reader with additional perspectives for monitoring school environments. These perspectives may also assist in assessing the constraints on efforts to implement alternatives and thereby be included in the diagnosis stage of the suggested model of change.

Comparisons Using School Observations

Looking first at results along the six dimensions analyzed, one finds each school reflecting discernible emphases (see Table 1). Differences among the four schools appear most striking in the categories of space and activities. (The reader is cautioned again that Free School data were obtained only by required changes in the data collection strategy.) The Contemporary School revealed the highest utilization of space in a uniform manner (generally students seated at desks), followed by the Continuous

TABLE 1

COMPARISONS OF ALTERNATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

	CONTEMPORARY SCHOOL	CONTINUOUS PROGRESS SCHOOL	OPEN SCHOOL	FREE SCHOOL*
USE OF SPACE	Uniform 77% Varied 23%	Uniform 60% Varied 40%	Uniform 21% Varied 79%	Uniform 32% Varied 68%
GROUPING PATTERNS	Uniform 64% Varied 36%	Uniform 65% Varied 35%	Uniform 21% Varied 79%	Uniform 21% Varied 79%
TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	Uniform 80% Varied 20%	Uniform 68% Varied 32%	Uniform 30% Varied 70%	Uniform 21% Varied 79%
ACTIVITY INITIATION	Adult 93% Adult/Student 7%	Adult 77% Adult/Student 23%	Adult 30% Adult/Student 37% Student 33%	Adult 7% Adult/Student 12% Student 71%
ADULTS IN ROOM	One 70% More than One 30%	One 4% More than One 96%	One 13% More than One 82%	None 17% One 63% More than One 20%

* Data for the Free School are subject to caution due to differences in data collection.

Progress School (students generally seated at tables). These results contrasted sharply with those for Open and Free Schools, which revealed almost opposite tendencies. A similar pattern is evident for activities. The Contemporary and Continuous Progress schools exhibit highest uses of uniform activities, with this tendency almost reversed for Open and Free schools. In both categories, some progression from Contemporary to Free is evident (considering Free School uniform space was largely devoted to band practice). (Adult input into how space was used also varied, with greater input noticed during our study at the Contemporary and Continuous Progress schools, and less adult input at the Open and Free schools.)

The two categories of grouping and adults also revealed some interesting variations and overlap. Results for grouping in Contemporary and Continuous Progress schools were almost identical and were identical for Open and Free schools. Results for adults present indicated another interesting parallel. The Continuous Progress and Open schools were closest to one another, with the Contemporary and Free schools similarly close to each other. (Again, adult input into grouping modes also varied, with greater adult input noticed in the Contemporary and Continuous Progress schools and more student input observed in the Open and Free schools.)

The category activity initiation revealed a decrease in adult initiation from the Contemporary School to the Free School. At the same time, there was a general increase in the percentage of combined adult/student initiation, with the exception of the Free School. This is due to the fact that the Free School had the highest level of solely student initiated activities; its level of solely adult initiated activities was low. Student initiation was also in evidence at the Open School, absent in both the Contemporary and Continuous Progress schools.

The data from our observations yielded a number of other similarities and differences. Both the Free and Open schools were interested in student responsibility for learning. The Free School risked a bit more in operationalizing such an interest. Yet, in a sense, was it really "a risk" to fulfill "radically" a "radical" philosophy? Both the Open and Continuous Progress schools were also interested in basic skills, student learning through an "integrated" curriculum, and student affect. The Open School provided interest centers (available daily), the Continuous Progress School provided interest groups (changed biweekly). Both the Contemporary and Continuous Progress schools stressed curriculum development, packaged series, and standardized monitoring. The Contemporary School started students off in grades on grade-referenced materials. The Continuous Progress School opted to take the "ungraded" path.

In interpreting the results of comparisons along all dimensions, extreme caution is a must due to both sample size and the fact that the importance placed upon such dimensions at each school varied considerably. Judgments of a better/worse nature ought to be particularly avoided.

Indeed, if judgments are to be made at all, they ought to be that each school appeared to be generally functioning not too off the mark of the ways in which it sought to function. That is, differences appeared "healthy" from the standpoint of creating a system of options in instructional environments.

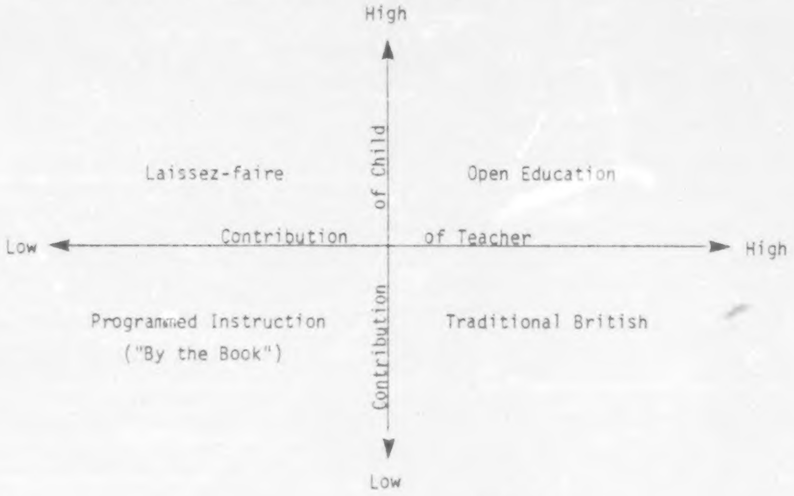
Comparisons Using Other Models

Varieties of conceptual models which attempt to categorize various schooling types have appeared in research literature over the years. Three of these are presented below to provide other perspectives of SEA's alternatives. Classifications of the SEA schools are intended mainly as heuristic devices—not hard and fast descriptions. They represent general tendencies.

The first approach is drawn from Epstein and McPartland (1975:7), who distinguish "open" from "traditional" schools along seven major dimensions. Each dimension is presented along with the positioning of each SEA school on a scale of "Found More Often" or "Found Less Often."

	Found More Often	Found Less Often
1. In class I must sit next to the same students.	Contemporary Cont.Progress	Open Free
2. I can talk to other students while I work.	Open Free	Contemporary Cont.Progress
3. In class, I can move about the room without asking the teacher.	Open Free	Contemporary Cont.Progress
4. In class, the teacher stands in front of the room and works with the class as a whole.	Contemporary Cont.Progress	Open Free
5. When I am working on a lesson, the other students in my class are working on the same lesson.	Contemporary Cont.Progress	Open Free
6. Most days there are several assignments the teacher tells me I could select, and I choose the one I want to work on.	Open Cont.Progress	Free Contemporary
7. I could fall behind in my work without the teacher finding out about it for a couple of weeks or more.	Free	Contemporary Cont.Progress Open

A second model, emphasizing the variable of activity initiation, is that of Bussis and Chittenden (1970:23). This model looks at degrees of input from both teacher and child. It depicts such input as forming four major types of schooling.



Were one to look at the SEA options, solely among the dimension of the extent to which adult and student were each active contributors to decisions regarding the process and content of learning, a gross distribution might place the Free School in the Laissez-faire quadrant, the Open School in the Open quadrant, and the Continuous Progress and Contemporary schools in the lower right quadrant.

Smith and Keith (1971:331) developed an initial conceptualization of individualized curriculum and instruction. Though it required subsequent modification to fit their specific purposes, it provides a useful point of departure. The model poses five levels distributed along dimensions of curricular goals, materials, and rates. SEA schools which seemed to generally dovetail in emphasis are noted alongside certain levels.

Level			
5	Pupil choice in goals, materials and rates	Pupils determine ends, means and rates.	Free School
4	Different goals, different materials and varying rates	Pupils work toward different ends (for example, enrichment) which involves different materials and varying rates as well	Open School
3	The same goals but varied materials and rates	Children are directed towards the same outcomes but may branch into special material (often remedial)	Contemporary School
2	Individualization: variation in rate	Possible variation in starting point; some children move through the material faster	Continuous Progress School
1	Traditional lock-step	All children in the same books and materials, moving at the same rate towards the same goal.	

McNeil (1969:300-302) has developed the notion of "data source" as a way of looking at curriculum development. Curricula may be distinguished according to relative weight given to either subject matter, or society, or the learner as a "data source." All such "data sources" were reflected in varying degrees at each SEA school. In general, however, the Free School stressed needed societal changes as well as learner interests. The Open School particularly stressed the learner. The Continuous Progress School seemed to underscore subject matter and the learner (e.g., interest groups). The Contemporary School attached considerable importance to subject matter. Our description, again, reflects impressions of gross tendencies and not absolute boundaries.

Indeed, the dangers of all such models only highlight the high degree of internal variation in each SEA school. The dominant emphases noted are far from total or the only emphases. On the contrary, one key to successes attained by SEA in developing a system of choice is the availability of "within-building" variation. The ease with which stereotypes can become attached to individual alternative schools (as often happened in SEA) is a pitfall practitioners considering alternatives might wish to doggedly combat. Not all Contemporary School students "sat at desks all day." Not all Continuous Progress School students "moved around all day." Not all Open School students attended "a big playpen." Not all Free School students "did nothing but goof off and smoke." Not all teachers at any SEA school taught only as those observed. In fact, each school seemed to house a spectrum of styles, overlapping with the styles of other SEA schools. Free School had some rather "structured" teachers; the Contemporary School ran a highly successful open classroom.

What then can be said about "points of overlap?" Were all the SEA schools really the same with but a veneer of difference on the surface of each? Far from it, but they did evidence several similarities including relatively small size, staffs who were present by choice, families who patronized them by choice, and a variety of shared influences emanating from both SEA and MPS status.

Comparisons Using External Influences

The alternatives shared the services of SEA-wide curriculum coordinators, internal evaluators, selected support staff (e.g., social workers, counselors), community resource coordinators, and volunteers. Each of these services had its impact, sometimes similar (never identical) on the various schools. The Free and Open schools language arts programs looked strikingly similar in certain aspects. The same curriculum coordinator served both and stressed naturalistic approaches to "languaging." Some schools, such as Continuous Progress and Contemporary, used computerized monitoring and curriculum development tools. Computer terminals for math could be found at Free, Contemporary, Open, and Continuous Progress schools. Counselors and/or resource coordinators tended to handle enrollments and transfers at all schools. Community resource programs were strong across all SEA schools (Patton, 1975a), particularly at the Open and Free Schools for which they were vital.

All schools, sometimes reluctantly, fell under the inescapable umbrella of the Minneapolis Public School system. School days began and ended under MPS guidelines. School buses rumbled across the district every morning and afternoon. Certain staff positions, time, and rights to time were set by MPS guidelines. Buildings were assigned engineers based on square footage. Signs on school doors extended an official MPS welcome to visitors. City-wide desegregation guidelines, testing programs, health services, and so on touched the life of every SEA school.

As noted, sometimes such "facts of life" were reluctantly accepted; sometimes they were challenged. The Free School did not appear on MPS official maps for some three years; it lost its principal in year four to state guidelines; it opted out of city testing programs; it fought for greater contract security for its staff (and lost).

Another influence upon the similarity of the alternatives was the nature of public schools as institutions. Undoubtedly readers have found similarities between the alternatives of SEA and the schools with which they are familiar. Regardless of the "innovativeness" of special programs, schools seem one of the most resilient of social institutions. The works of Dreeben (1973), Jackson (1968) and Smith and Geoffrey (1968) have highlighted some persistent characteristics of public schools.

"Crowds" are one example, as Dreeben notes:

> One can view schools in terms of structural "responses" to the problem of managing the lives of large numbers of children gathered in confined spaces for long term instruction (1973:456).

Jackson identifies a number of seemingly inescapable features of crowds in public schools, particularly students' experiences of delay, denial and interruption. These features persisted in the alternatives of SEA. As an example, at the Free School, one student entered the music room while the volunteer was tutoring another. The entering student was politely told: "Be with you in a while, when I'm finished here." We also observed some examples of denial (e.g., "The gym's full. I wanted to play tennis, but it's all signed up.") as well as interruption (e.g., "Anyone seen any primary students here?"). The Free School was selected as an example because of its stereotype as SEA's most radical option.

The teacher's role within the various alternatives also shared characteristics common to teaching in general. Jackson (1968) categorized teacher roles as typically including that of gatekeeper of dialogue, supply sargeant, granter of privileges, and time keeper. Smith and Geoffrey (1968) provide a conceptual glossary on "the behavior of teaching," which stems from a study of a "traditional" school. It includes such notions as preparations for contengencies, the provisional try, ringmastership, and others of equal interest. The concepts listed above were observed of teachers during our investigation. While the specific content (e.g., ways of being a "ringmaster") varied by school and teacher observed and each school's cultural milieu had some influence upon the operationalization of such concepts, these general characteristics of schools and teaching persisted, too.

Conclusions

The need for shared resources, among alternatives, local school district and state level policies, and the characteristics of schools as social instituions, all placed parameters on the "range of variability" found among SEA's alternatives. Within these parameters, however, variability did exist in the way schools structured their instructional environments. Further, it is our contention that sufficient variability existed to conclude that, at the elementary level, SEA did provide alternatives. Further, these alternatives were consistent with the general goals and objectives defining the alternatives.

Monitoring Instructional Environments

Thus far we have reported the following aspects of implementing alternative schools: (1) program conceptualization (diagnosis, initiation and definition), (2) implementation (mobilizing technical and community support systems) and (3) instructional analysis (monitoring instructional environments). Our instructional analysis has focused upon six dimensions: activities, use of time, use of space, grouping, adult interaction, and activity initiation. In this manner we have been able to examine the organization of teachers and pupils for instruction, the role behavior of teachers and learning activities of students. Other dimensions may be identified for these purposes from the other models we examined or from the reader's own knowledge and priorities.

Monitoring of instructional environments has at least three purposes. One, we have used it to assess the extent to which operational programs were congruent with intent, i.e., program conceptualization. Two, it has allowed us to determine the extent to which operational programs differed within SEA. Three, instructional monitoring has also addressed the issue of accountability, a theme introduced in Chapter One.

Charters and Jones (1973) argue, as many have, that "school experiences constitute a small part of what children know" and that schools should be held accountable for the instructional environments they create rather than typically measured "outcomes of schooling" of students (e.g., achievement test scores).

> In fact, we are inclined to the view that the school's responsibility for a child's education ends...at the point where the student is found to be engaging in, and engaged by, sequences of instructional events which, according to the best contemporary knowledge of pedagogy available to the school, have a reasonably high probability of producing the desired learning outcomes. To hold a school system accountable for the measured outcomes, themselves, seems to be an unwarranted shift to one institution of the responsibility that more properly rests in the pedagogical sciences and the R&D community (p.7).

The reliance upon achievement scores as a means of "monitoring instructional environments" reflects, we feel, not only an accountability perspective that may or may not be appropriate, but the fact that achievement tests are a convenient measurement device. Education's use of per pupil expenditure, teacher experience and teacher/pupil ratios are other visible, convenient criteria to use in assessing the "quality" of instructional programs. The relationship between these convenient indicators and the day-to-day experiences of students may be so indirect and distant as to be of little value. The examination of instructional environments in terms of selected dimensions, such as those discussed and suggested in this chapter, may provide a better reading on the "realities of schooling" which students experience.

Outcomes of schooling, however, are still important to many people. Alternative schools have been subjected to a number of "expectations or conclusions" about how they influence student outcomes and which alternative is "best" in terms of these criteria. Another reason why outcomes are important to consider is that, while the school is not the only or perhaps even the major influence on basic skills acquisition, to deny that the school is an influence also seems unreasonable. We therefore turn to the sixth stage of the suggested model of implementing alternatives—monitoring instructional outcomes.

CHAPTER FIVE

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS: STUDENT EFFECTS

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the effects of the instructional environments of the four elementary alternatives on students. Until now, we have been concerned with adults. We have examined Southeast Alternatives (SEA) in terms of the commitments of adults, their strategies of implementation and their activities in classrooms. We have described learning environments using adult observations of other adults, following models of schooling created by still other adults. From these adult perspectives, we have tried to grasp, in part, what schooling is like for students. In this chapter, students themselves have provided the data for our analyses.

Four areas will be discussed. First, students' perspectives of the characteristics of schooling in the various alternatives will be examined. In this manner, we will be able to determine the concepts students use to describe instructional environments and whether the alternatives of SEA differ in terms of student generated criteria. Second, the results of a student affective survey will be provided to determine what differences, if any, exist among the alternatives in terms of students' self-concept, students' attitudes toward the general social climate of the school, and students' perceptions of their role in the instructional process. Third, we will examine the basic skills performance of students on objectives-based tests and standardized achievement tests. The structure of alternatives generates different questions for this analysis than for evaluations of more typical innovations, e.g., we are not concerned here with determining if a new program is better than an existing program. Our basic question is: Given the differences in the instructional environments of SEA, were each of the alternatives able to achieve the goal of providing quality instruction in basic skills? To provide a true system of choice, it is necessary that the quality of each program be equivalent in terms of certain "givens" for schools. From our perspective, the acquisition of basic skills is a given. Fourth, the effects on students of changing from one alternative to another will be examined. The element of choice in a system of alternatives purports to facilitate the match between students and programs. A focus upon students who are "changers" provides an opportunity to see if a better match is achieved. (The logistics of choice are described in Chapter Three.)

These four areas of concern—student perceptions of schooling, affect, achievement, and change of school—are considered to be of particular interest given the differences among instructional environments reported in Chapter Four. They also provide four strategies in monitoring instructional effects. We will conclude the chapter with a listing of several major questions in monitoring instructional effects in a system of alternatives.

Student Perceptions of Schooling

This section discusses the concepts used by students to describe school in terms of what each of three sets of actors in school do—kids, teachers and principals* The purpose is two-fold: (1) to determine the characteristics of schools as students perceive them, and (2) to identify which characteristics are shared by SEA schools and a "traditional" school selected for comparison from within the larger Minneapolis Public School system. While these data provide an additional basis for comparison of the instructional environments of SEA (see Chapter Four), they are included in this chapter because they are: (1) student-centered rather than adult-centered perceptions, and (2) a consequence or effect of exposure to a particular set of experiences.

We were also interested in the perceptions of students as a means of examining the "continuum" of SEA schools. The adult perception is that the Contemporary School is the most structured and most conservative (the right end of the continuum) and the Free School is the most unstructured and radical (the left end of the continuum) with the Open and Continuous Progress schools in between, as diagrammed:

Free ◄► Open ◄► Continuous Progress ◄► Contemporary

The continuum has been widely subscribed to by SEA personnel, community residents, and NIE Experimental Schools staff. Our data in Chapter Four support the continuum. The question of interest here is: "Do students see it?"

Student Definitions

A brief overview of the data collection strategy may be of interest to those seeking similar information from students.

> The data collection procedure for this study involved a Delphi-type survey. First, students in the four elementary alternatives of SEA plus the comparison site...were asked to provide written information on things people do at school. In each of the SEA schools, except Free School, a sample of 60-70 intermediate students were asked to respond. Because of its small enrollment and poor attendance the Free School's sample amounted to fifteen students. At (the comparison school) all intermediate students were polled. Each student was given a packet of twenty 3x5 index cards. On each of ten white cards students were asked to write one thing which kids do at school. On each of five pink cards, they were asked to write one thing that teachers do at school, and on each of five green cards they were asked to write one thing that the principal does at school. Activities listed were compiled into lists for each school and numbered. Using a table of random numbers, an equal number of activities were drawn from each school list. This produced a questionnaire with 100 items—50 things which kids do at school, 25 things which teachers do at school, and 25 things which the

---

*This discussion is derived from the larger study reported by Nelson (1975b).

> principal does at school. The resulting questionnaire... was then taken back to the five schools, and administered to intermediate-level classes. At the Free School, students in the appropriate age brackets were located and asked to respond individually (Nelson, 1975b).

Students were asked to agree or disagree with each item. Items were compared for each pair of schools to determine a ranking of schools from most similar to least similar. Items were coded by school at two levels: 50% or more positive responses and 75% or more positive responses. These criteria were used to identify the dominant characteristics of schooling as defined by students.

Similarities Among Schools

On the basis of student perceptions, the SEA schools are more similar than they are different. At the 50% positive response level 79 of the 100 items were shared by all five schools, and 84 by the four SEA schools. Only the Free School showed a significant number of distinctive traits (5). At the 75% positive response level, 47 objectives were shared among all five schools, and 56 among the SEA schools. It should be noted, however, that more traits were shared between Contemporary, Open, Continuous Progress and the Comparison School (11) than between the Contemporary, Open, Continuous Progress and Free Schools (9). Furthermore, an additional five items were shared by the Contemporary, Open and Continuous Progress schools; thus those three schools answered alike on 72 of the 100 objectives. Again, only the Free School showed many distinctive traits.

An overview of the similarities among schools can be gained by looking at pairs of schools. The following ranking is from most similar to least similar:

FIGURE 2

SIMILARITIES AMONG SCHOOLS
(STUDENT PERCEPTIONS)

MOST SIMILAR → Contemporary ←→ Continuous Progress
Open ←→ Continuous Progress
Contemporary ←→ Comparison
Contemporary ←→ Open
Continuous Progress ←→ Comparison
Open ←→ Free
Open ←→ Comparison
Contemporary ←→ Free
Continuous Progress ←→ Free
LEAST SIMILAR → Free ←→ Comparison

The data derived from student perceptions support the existance of a continuum with the Free School at one end and the Contemporary School at the other. Also, the Contemporary School is most like the non-SEA Comparison School. The Free School is less like the other SEA alternatives than they are like each other and it is less like the Comparison School than the other SEA alternatives.

While differences exist between the alternatives and they form a distinctive unit of alternatives, the similarity of perceptions among students is most striking. The following characteristics were common for all five schools (47 items with 75% of the students responding positively):

Students:
(25 of 50)

- sass
- go to gym
- go to band
- write
- paint
- do reading
- have fun
- sit
- have lunch
- play four square
- play games
- sometimes be quiet
- get mad at the teachers
- have free time
- play
- spell
- bitch at other kids
- do art
- play kickball
- goof off
- go to the bathroom
- run
- write stories
- have "groups"
- talk

Teachers:
(11 of 25)

- teach science
- watch
- help kids to learn
- talk to the other teachers
- read
- work
- go outside
- drink coffee
- teach
- have meetings
- break up fights
- write

Principals:
(10 of 25)

- give orders to kids
- check up on things
- talk
- do business
- have meetings
- fill out forms
- talk to kids in the office
- make rules
- make phone calls
- drink coffee

If we drop the Comparison School and the Free School, we find an additional 25 items shared by the three SEA alternatives which enrolled 95% of SEA's students.

Students:
(10 more)

- go to the library
- do science
- do social studies
- plant things
- teach each other
- go to woodworking
- have tables
- hit
- build things
- watch video tapes

Teachers:
(7 more)

- take students to the principal
- play games with students
- take kids places
- teach you new math games
- get their jollies
- read books to you
- help you learn about this school

Principals:
(8 more)

- work with kids
- have aide meetings
- keep order
- come in the classroom to talk to the kids
- check the rooms
- lead the school
- keep things going
- OK (approve) things

In summary, 75% of the students agreed upon a total of 35 of 50 items about what kids do, 19 of 25 items about what teachers do, and 18 of 25 items about what principals do.

The items generated by students were quite distant from adult goal statements or analyses of what schools are like. From their perspectives, students do not "meet with opportunities for success," or "move through a sequenced curriculum," or "develop positive feelings about self," or "receive quality instruction in basic skills." While we would be surprised if students did describe schooling in this manner, adults do not typically use student perceptions for insights about the effects of instructional programs. In our studies, student perceptions were useful to provide a check on our own conclusions about the similarities among the alternatives. Readers may think student perspectives to be a valuable supplement to adult perceptions of other issues of concern.

Our investigation of students' perceptions of the instructional environment was supplemented by an examination of how students reacted to those environments. While students, teachers and principals may "do" similar things in different schools, the manner in which activities and people interact may have different consequences for students' attitudes.

Affective Aspects

From its inception, Southeast Alternatives has been concerned with facilitating affective education. While each school deals with this area in different ways, all four elementary programs have made some attempt to provide students with school environments in which they can feel comfortable and successful with the schooling process. These concerns were consistent with the criticisms of public education in the late 1960's and early 1970's. As Crabill and Kane (1976) describe, there existed:

> ...a sense of fundamental discontent and concern for creating a congenial environment in which children can function under their own dictates without a compulsion for benchmarks of achievement....Regardless of whether or not benchmarks for achievement are a dysfunctional measure of schooling, many educators believe that a positive attitude toward schooling is desirable and should be fostered. Proponents of alternatives have long felt that diversity in learning environments can better accommodate diversity in student learning style. The better match of students and programs is seen as yielding more positive attitudes (p.3).

In an effort to be responsive to the emerging SEA programs, the external evaluation developed an Affective Survey to address the affective interests, climates and goals of alternative schools (Kane, 1975). The theoretical framework, program priorities and instrumentation were developed with the counsel and assistance of SEA staff. The survey was designed to measure students' attitudes in three broad categories.*

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*The survey, a paper and pencil group instrument, was piloted in Fall, 1972 and finalized in Spring, 1973. Two forms, primary and intermediate, were developed with different response options for each form. Reliability and validity studies were carried out in 1974; the instrument was accepted as a viable tool in measuring student affect in SEA (Crabill, 1975). The survey was administered each Spring for the three middle years of the Project (1973-75) to all elementary students in SEA.

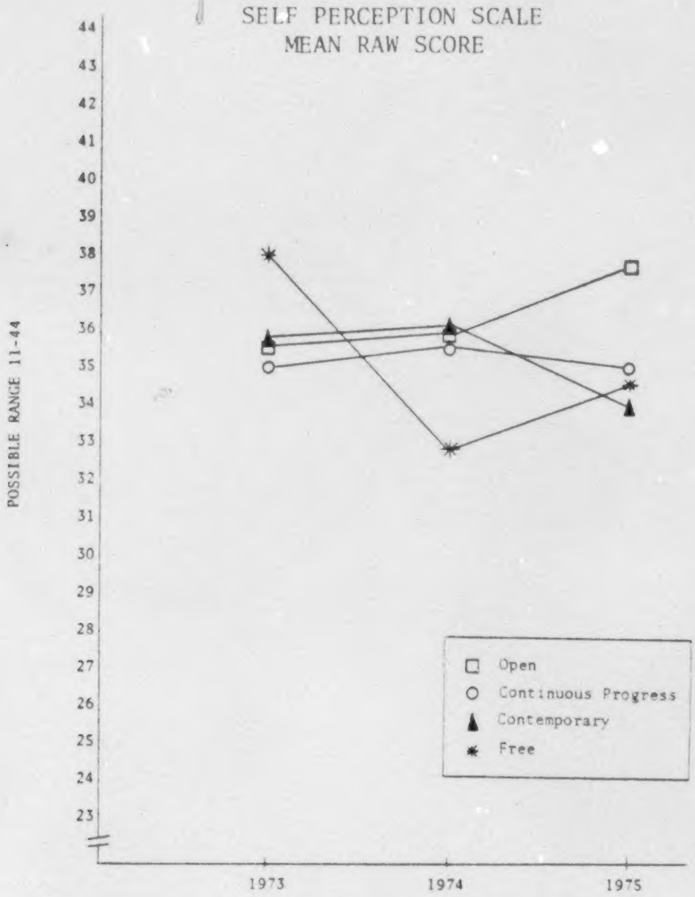
> ### Perception of Self as a Student
>
> There are seventeen items of the Affective Survey in this general area of concern, designed to measure the student's perception of the general school situation in terms of his/her self-confidence, self-concept within the context of his schooling...generated in response to the concerns of teachers that a student feel he/she can learn and feel competent, successful and comfortable in those situations which the school presents (Kane, 1975).
>
> ### Attitudes toward School
>
> The thirty-two items of this area are directed toward the student's perceptions of specific aspects of his/her school experiences such as attitudes toward the specific school, teachers, peers, and reactions to the reading and math programs. The focus of concern is upon a variety of perceptions at one point in time (Kane, 1975).
>
> ### Participation Descriptors
>
> The third general area of affective concerns is distinctively different from the other two areas of the Survey. In contrast, the eight items of this area were designed to serve as descriptors of the different instructional programs rather than common goals to be attained by all alternatives....The items address two aspects of a child's view of his participation in the process of learning. The questions ask the child about his perceived role in choice-making within the school.... These items were meant to address myths and practices ascribed to the various forms and structures of the alternatives (Kane, 1975).

Because of the similar affective goals of the SEA elementary alternatives and the proposition that choice of school would facilitate a match between students and program, all schools were expected to be similar in students' perceptions of self and attitudes toward school. Differences were expected, however, in students' responses to the participation descriptors.

Perception of Self

The hypothesis of no difference among alternatives in students' self-concept in the school setting was generally supported:

FIGURE 3


SELF PERCEPTION SCALE
MEAN RAW SCORE

While some differences did exist, there were no trends among those differences. (The lack of significant differences among school means is shown in Table 2 on page 98.) As a system of alternatives, SEA appears to be fostering positive school attitudes in the student population it serves. When asked to make either a positive or negative judgment to their specific school situation, students responded positively and expressed confidence in their abilities to be successful in their learning endeavors. Though unique differences exist between schools, each school environment promoted feelings that learning can be an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

The lack of differences may also be understandable when we consider that a student's self-concept may, like achievement, be subject to many factors beyond the control and influence of schools. Further, because of the similarities among schools in what kids do, students' reported self-concept may be a response to the school setting itself rather than the manipulations of various aspects of that setting.

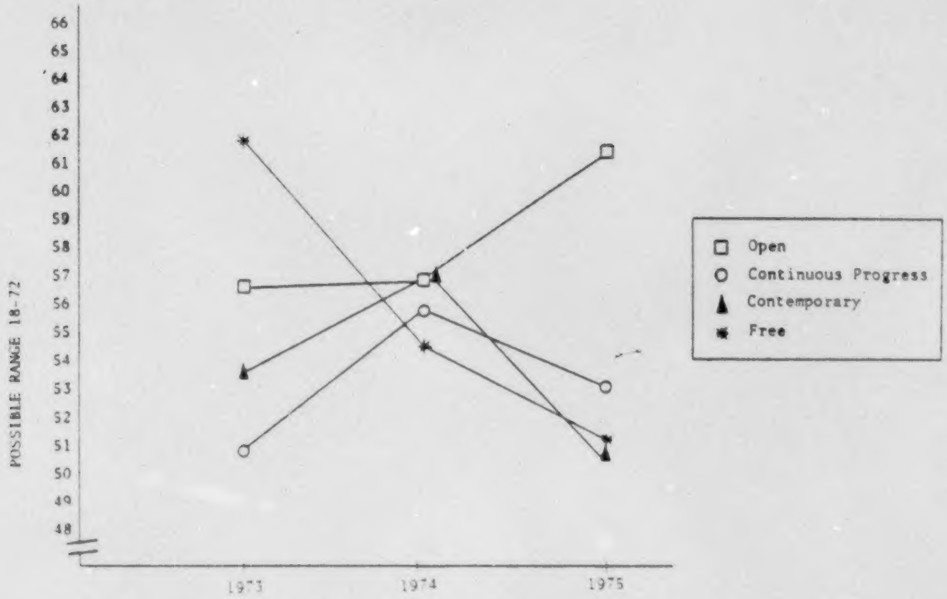
Attitudes toward School

The hypothesis of no differences among schools in students' attitudes toward school is not supported. Differences among the schools did exist even though there has been a trend towards convergence among three schools (see Figure 4). Whereas there were rather discrete feelings about the specific school environments in 1973, there now appears to be some shared reactions among students of the Free, Contemporary and Continuous Progress schools. The trends at Free and Open are opposite—a decline in positive attitude at Free School and an increase in positive feelings at the Open School.

Beyond the overall positive reactions of all students, students at the Open School expressed more positive reactions toward their teachers and peers. (The significance of differences among schools is shown in Table 2.) They felt they could communicate more effectively and work more closely with their teachers than did any other group. These findings are consistent with those of other studies of Open schools (Traub et al., 1973,1974; Tuckman et al., 1973; and Epstein and McPartland, 1975).

FIGURE 4

SCHOOL ATTITUDES SCALE
MEAN RAW SCORE



School Participation

The greatest differences among schools, as hypothesized, were in students' perceptions of school participation. Over the years, students at the Free and Open schools have felt more in control of their daily school activities than have students at the Contemporary and Continuous Progress schools (see Figure 5). Over the three years studied, the differences between the more traditional and least traditional schools were consistent. Were it not for the gradual decline in School Participation scores at the Free School, the statistical differences along the theoretical continuum of "structure" would have been absolute (see Table 2). Namely, Contemporary students reported more structure than Continuous Progress students, who indicated more structure than Free or Open students. (These results are consistent with our observations reported in Chapter Four.)

FIGURE 5

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION SCALE
MEAN RAW SCORE

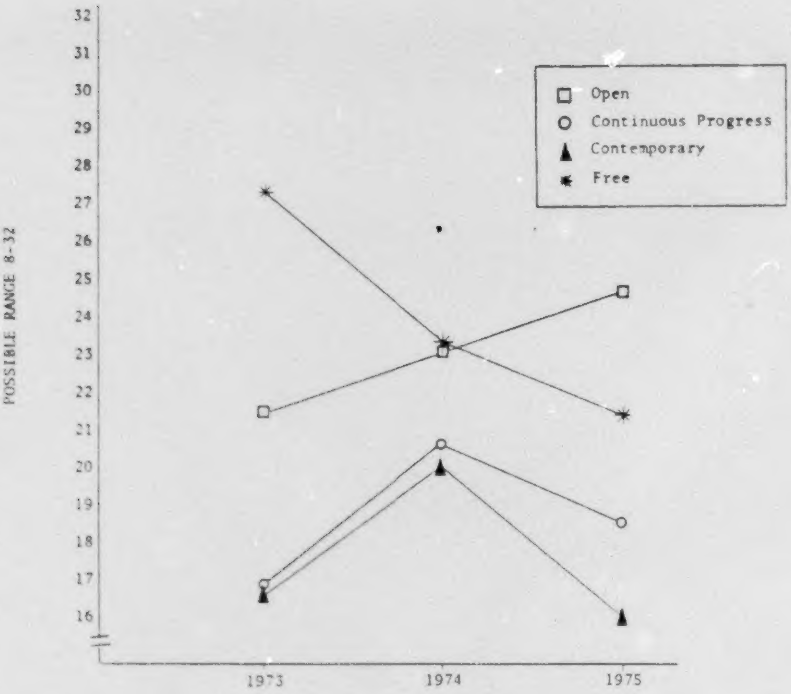


TABLE 2

SUMMARY OF MEAN DIFFERENCES ON AFFECTIVE SURVEY

Scale	Contemporary	Continuous Progress	Free	Open	SEA
Self-Perception					
1973	35.88	34.99	37.88	35.68	35.58
1974	35.96	35.73	32.92	35.90	35.57
1975	33.96	35.05	34.60	37.32	35.40
School Attitudes					
1973	53.28	50.91	61.60	56.15	53.39
1974	56.56	55.33	54.36	56.53	55.83
1975	50.21	52.89	51.25	61.23	54.52
School Participation					
1973	16.51	16.76	27.20	21.27	18.28
1974	19.68	20.37	23.32	23.27	21.22
1975	15.89	18.45	21.20	24.38	19.67

NOTE: Unbroken underlines indicate subsets of schools whose means do not differ significantly as determined by Scheffé Test for A Posteriori Comparisons.

School Influences

In general, the results of the Affective Survey show increasing differences between schools as we examined students' responses to areas under increasing control by schools. That is, differences increased from perceptions of self to attitudes towards school to participation in school. Further, a similarity in school trends over time is observed when attitudes toward school (Figure 4) and school participation (Figure 5) results are compared.* Three trends are evidenced: (1) Free School students becoming less positive and involved, (2) Open School students becoming more positive and involved, and (3) Continuous Progress and Contemporary school students first becoming more and then less positive and involved. As part of the external evaluation, an observer was in each school over the three years measured by the Affective Survey. Their qualitative data has offered potential insight into factors underlying these trends.

The key to each trend appears to center on specific actions which significantly impacted the overall school climate. At Free School, factionalism and disharmony developed regarding directions in which the school moved. These disruptive influences have continued somewhat unresolved. During 1973 the Open School initiated a family structure and over the years modified this grouping arrangement until a system developed which was considered to maximize interaction among students and staff.

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*The correlations between the Attitude towards School and School Participation sub-scales ranged from .64 to .68 for the three years of administration.

In the Fall of 1975 the Continuous Progress School merged from two buildings into one; previously the primary and intermediate students had separate buildings. The merger generated some degree of crowding, as well as increased age range of groups, which may have affected the pacing of work and student interaction. Finally, during the years 1974 and 1975 the Contemporary School experienced loss of several key staff which the ethnographers felt may have significantly blunted the thrust of its program (Crabill and Kane, 1976). These school-wide situations suggest influences on the instructional environments of the alternatives and thereby students' affective outcomes.

Cognitive Aspects

The purpose of this section is to examine the extent to which the elementary alternatives of SEA were able to provide quality instruction in basic skills. Four areas of interest have emerged. First, there has been considerable discussion between the external evaluation, SEA and the National Institute of Education concerning the measurement and analysis of basic skills. We begin this section by providing a background into the issues surrounding our use of both objectives-based tests and standardized achievement tests. Second, we are interested in the variability among alternatives in levels of achievement as indicated by both tests. Third, we are interested in the relative performance of SEA over time compared to all Minneapolis Public Schools. And fourth, we are interested in whether a "selectivity factor" exists among alternatives, i.e., do the alternatives attract students with different levels of performance in basic skills.

Measurement Strategies

Traditionally, cognitive growth and performance are measured through the use of standardized achievement batteries. While SEA has participated in the Minneapolis City-Wide Achievement Testing program, it has done so with some degree of reluctance. Nationwide, the standardized testing issue has become one of heated debates and polarized opinions—Minneapolis and SEA are no exception to that emerging trend. The role of standardized tests as an effective evaluation tool became an issue of great concern to many administrators and staff within SEA. The importance of this issue to SEA personnel is reflected by two decisions made at the district and city level. The first decision, in 1971, permitted Southeast Free School's withdrawal from participation in the city-wide testing program because of its unique curriculum. However, in light of substantial changes in the number and content of the tests used by the city, and because of SEA's desire to have consistent longitudinal data on each school, the Free School started participating in the testing program in September 1974. Actually, withdrawal of the Free School was not as serious a problem as it may appear. Less than ten percent of the elementary students in SEA attend the Free School (French, 1975a).

The second decision was to have SEA's internal evaluation team prepare and submit to Minneapolis Public Schools a position paper on "The Relationship of Standardized Testing to Southeast Alternatives" (Byers and Rawitsch, 1974). The report was an expression of the general opinion in SEA of the inadequacy of standardized instrumentation to assess learning in the different curricular environments. SEA's position focuses on the hypothesis that four unique learning situations exist in the elementary components and that within that context "each child learns in a unique way. Consequently, the assessment of his learning should be in a manner compatible with the uniqueness and in ways which are a true reflection of the objectives and methods of the curriculum which fostered the learning" (Byers and Rawitsch, 1974). Furthermore, all schools do not accept the premise of mastery of certain skills at a particular point in a child's schooling. The latter point, they felt, was central to the development and use of standardized achievement tests.

Criterion-referenced tests were developed in response to SEA's concern about total reliance on standardized instruments for cognitive assessment. While SEA's position on testing did not become "formalized" until 1974, the external evaluation team was acutely aware of the general opinion within the district and moved rapidly during the first year of SEA's existence towards some form of criterion referenced measurement.* Four tests were developed: (1) Primary Reading (10 objectives for students 6 to 8 years old), (2) Intermediate Reading (23 objectives for students 9 to 11 years old), (3) Primary Math (23 objectives for students 6 to 8 years old), and (4) Intermediate Math (24 objectives for students 9 to 11 years old).

Performance on the objectives-based tests was judged on the basis of the number of objectives accomplished at two levels of "mastery." To give an example, suppose that one of the ten objectives of primary reading was tested by four questions. If twenty students at one of the schools took the test, a total of 80 items could have been answered correctly. If 40 correct answers were scored for the group, the performance of that group, on that objective, would have been 50%. Two levels of "mastery" were reviewed in studying performance on the MET Tests—the 50% level and the 80% level.

Testing Results

During the three years in which the objectives-based tests have been given, performance among the four alternatives has been remarkably stable. This has been true of all four tests—the primary mathematics and reading tests and the intermediate mathematics and reading tests. The results for 1975 are presented in Table 3. Similar results were seen in the previous years. Considering all possible differences between the performance in 1974 and 1975, only three results were statistically significant. This is remarkable, because sixty-four different combinations of school, test, age and level of "mastery" were examined. Only one significant difference was observed between 1973 and 1974. (There was no pattern to the four observed changes.)

Viewing the performance of the alternative schools over three years (1973, 1974 and 1975), there is only one continuing difference. The performance of the Contemporary School consistently has been the strongest in mathematics. The strength of the performance has been apparent in both primary and intermediate mathematics. However, when total scores are used in analysis instead of objectives achieved, it should be noted that only a small proportion of the variance in all MET Test scores—mathematics and reading—is accounted for by school. (The interested reader is referred to French and Allison, 1975, for a more detailed discussion.) Thus, it would appear that the most important finding of the MET Tests is the overriding similarity of results for the alternative schools, and their stability over time.

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*Development of objectives-based tests began in the summer of 1972; tests were piloted in the fall. Extensive revisions were required before administering the tests in spring, 1973. Before the spring administrations of the MET Tests in 1974, some further revisions were made. The emphasis of the primary reading test was substantially changed from reading readiness to areas of general test importance for reading at the primary level. Revisions of the other 1974 MET Tests were minor, consisting mostly of changes in format of instructions for the tests (French and Reynolds, 1974; French and Allison, 1975).

TABLE 3

RESULTS OF OBJECTIVES-BASED TESTS (1975)

Achievement of Ten Primary Reading Objectives by Six and Eight Year Olds

		School			
Level of Mastery	Age	Free	Open	Continuous Progress	Contemporary
50%	6	8	8	8	9
	8	9	10	10	10
80%	6	1	5	4	6
	8	7	9	8	9

Achievement of Twenty-Three Intermediate Reading Objectives by Nine and Eleven Year Olds

		School				
Level of Mastery	Age	Free	Open	Continuous Progress	Contemporary	Jr/Sr
50%	9	14	20	22	18	-
	11	22	23	22	20	22
80%	9	2	5	8	6	-
	11	11	14	8	12	16

Achievement of Twenty-Three Primary Mathematics Objectives by Six and Eight Year Olds

		School			
Level of Mastery	Age	Free	Open	Continuous Progress	Contemporary
50%	6	20	19	18	22
	8	21	23	23	23
80%	6	13	8	8	11
	8	17	21	16	23

Achievement of Twenty-Four Intermediate Mathematics Objectives by Nine and Eleven Year Olds

		School				
Level of Mastery	Age	Free	Open	Continuous Progress	Contemporary	Jr/Sr
50%	9	11	13	14	14	-
	11	18	18	16	20	15
80%	9	5	3	3	9	-
	11	7	7	5	12	7

The most obvious limitation of the objectives-based test is their lack of comparability. It is not possible to look at results of the MET Tests and have an idea of how elementary students in SEA compare with their peers around the country or in Minneapolis. The tests were developed from objectives of Southeast Minneapolis schools and only SEA students have taken the tests. In light of these limitations, student cognitive performance was also monitored through the Minneapolis City-Wide Testing Program. Although standardized instruments have their own limitations, they were the only measures of cognitive abilities administered over the life of the project and for which baseline (pre-project) data existed.*

The data in Figure 6 for Grade One provide insight into the performance of students upon entry into each alternative. By virtue of choice of school by students and parents, the Open School initially attracted students who scored highest on the Metropolitan Readiness Test. Both the Contemporary School and Continuous Progress Schools attracted lower performing students. The differences among the three schools increased compared to neighborhood attendance patterns prior to choice under SEA. These differences have decreased over time to the point where all four elementary alternatives are attracting students with similar levels of performance. The relative standing of the alternatives, as a group, compared to MPS schools has been essentially the same in grade one over time.

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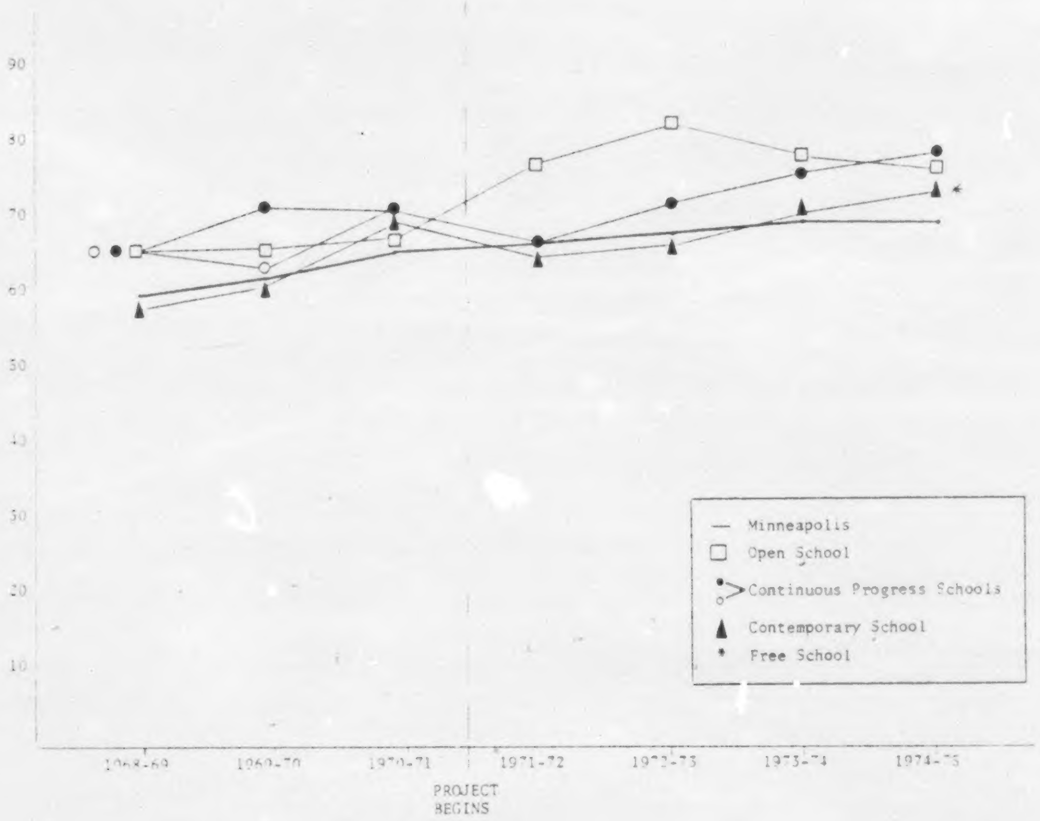
*Within SEA, students were tested in the fall on a yearly basis. The Metropolitan Readiness Test was used in grade 1; the Gates-McGinitie Reading Test (Comprehension and Vocabulary) in grades 3, 4, 5 and 6. (No scores for tests of Mathematics are reported because of incomplete data for some schools.) SEA sample sizes range from 24 to 54 students per grade in each school. (Free School samples contain approximately five students per grade level.) Student selection for grade level testing in the ungraded programs were based primarily upon age criteria. Achievement test results are reported as the median score for each school and the median score for the city of Minneapolis. The median was chosen as the most appropriate descriptive statistic because of its ability to accurately reflect skewed distributions.

FIGURE 6

METROPOLITAN READINESS TEST
MEDIAN RAW SCORE



The results of the Gates-McGinitie Reading Tests for Grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 are presented in Figures 7-14. (Continuous Progress has two schools reported when appropriate.) Inspection of these data lead to the following conclusions:

1. SEA's median performance on standardized tests is consistently higher than the overall median performance of Minneapolis' schools (considering all grades and years).
2. The performance of students in SEA has been similar to that of pre-project years.
3. The differences in performance among the schools of SEA have decreased over time. That is, there were greater differences among schools when enrollment was determined by residence than after the initiation of alternatives and enrollment determined by choice.

FIGURE 7

GATES (GRADE THREE) COMPREHENSION
MEDIAN RAW SCORE

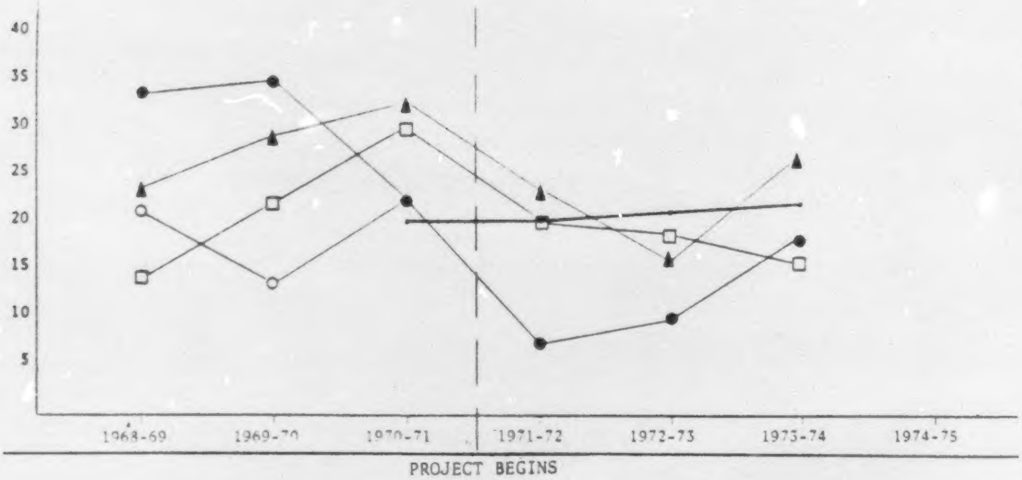
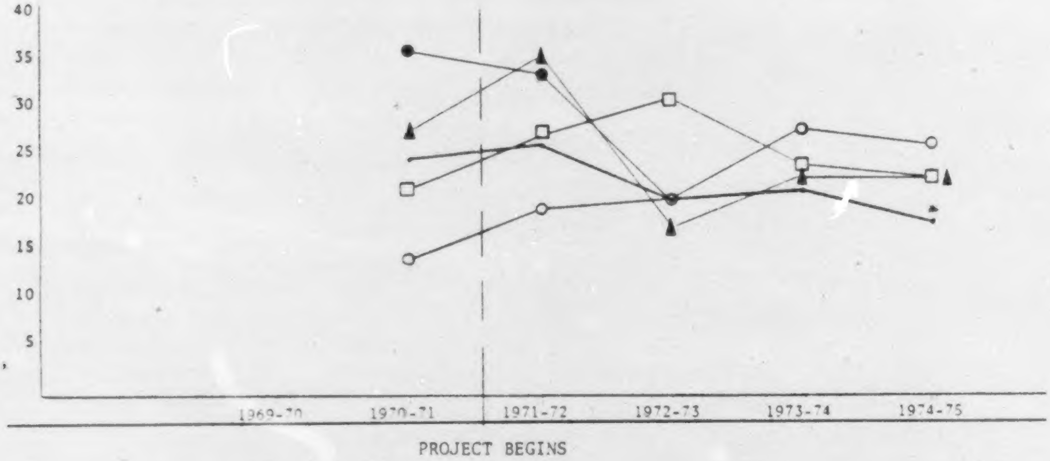


FIGURE 8

GATES (GRADE FOUR) COMPREHENSION
MEDIAN RAW SCORE



— Minneapolis
☐ Open School
●/○ > Continuous Progress Schools
▲ Contemporary School
• Free School

FIGURE 9

GATES (GRADE FIVE) COMPREHENSION
MEDIAN RAW SCORE

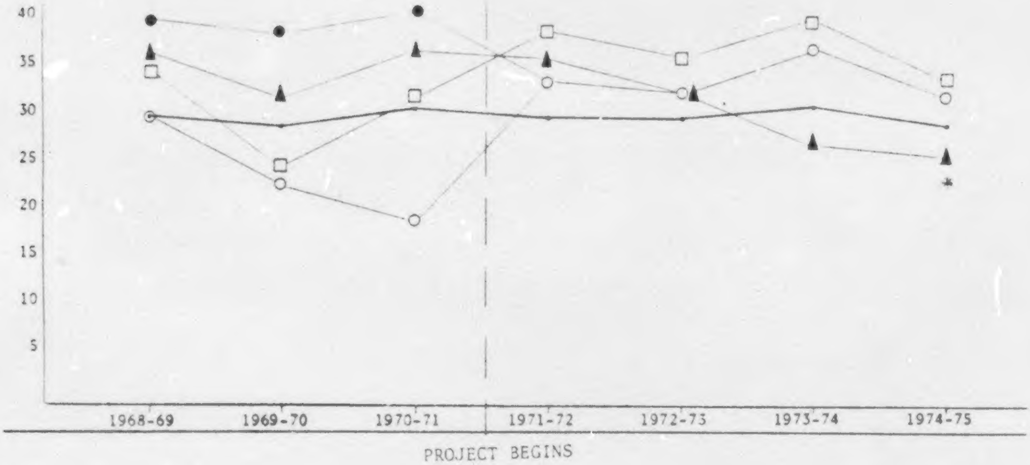
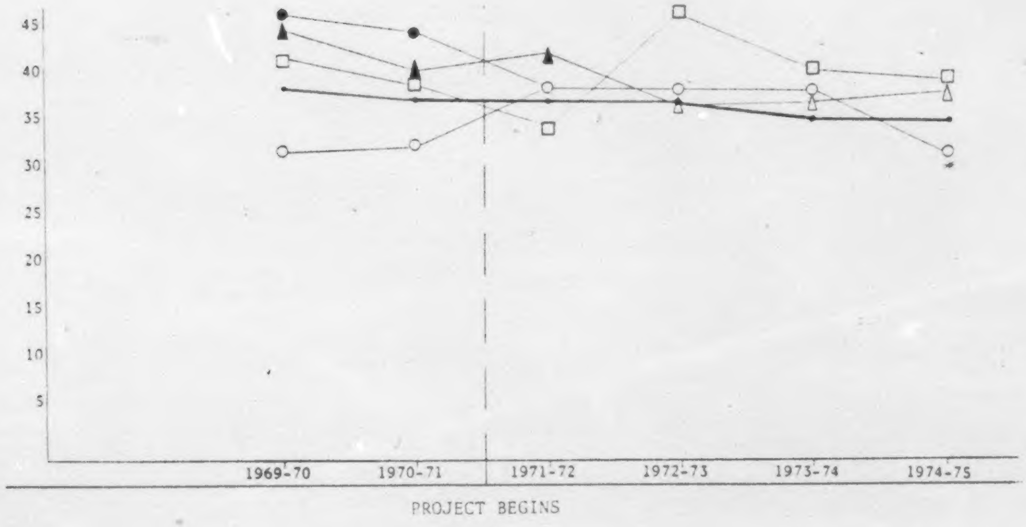


FIGURE 10

GATES (GRADE SIX) COMPREHENSION
MEDIAN RAW SCORE



— Minneapolis
☐ Open School
● ○ > Continuous Progress Schools
▲ Contemporary School
* Free School

FIGURE 11

GATES (GRADE THREE) VOCABULARY
MEDIAN RAW SCORE

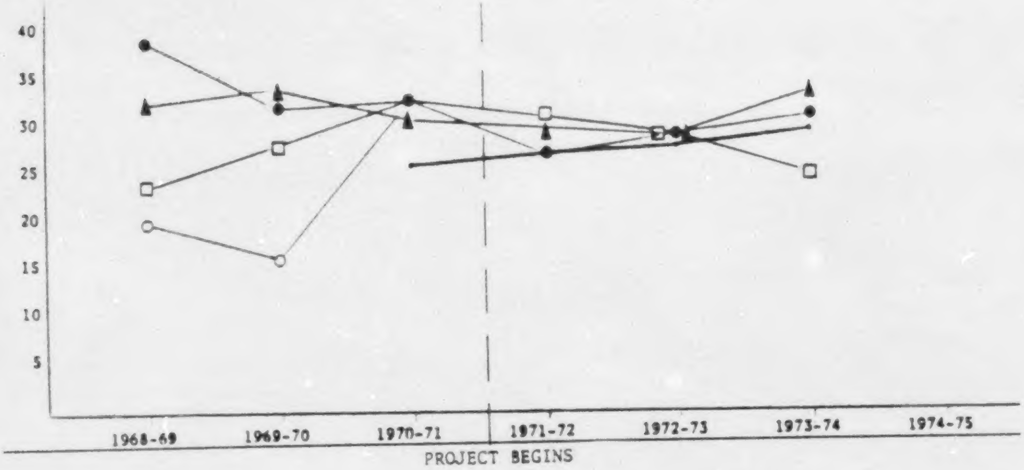


FIGURE 12

GATES (GRADE FOUR) VOCABULARY
MEDIAN RAW SCORE

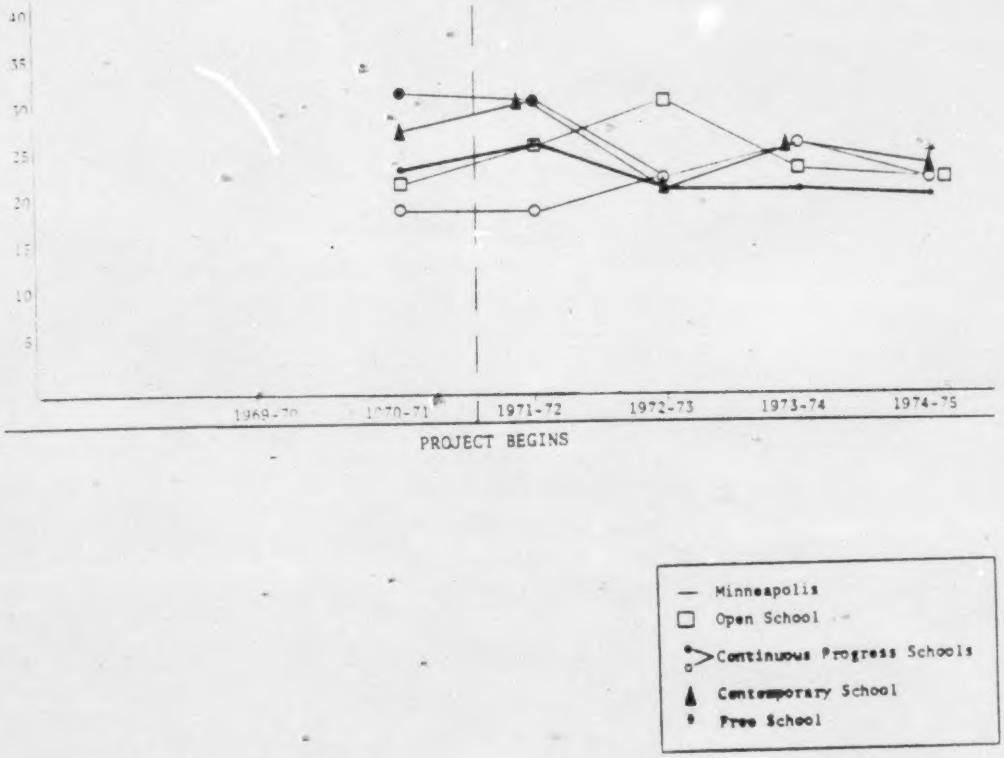


FIGURE 13

GATES (GRADE FIVE) VOCABULARY
MEDIAN RAW SCORE

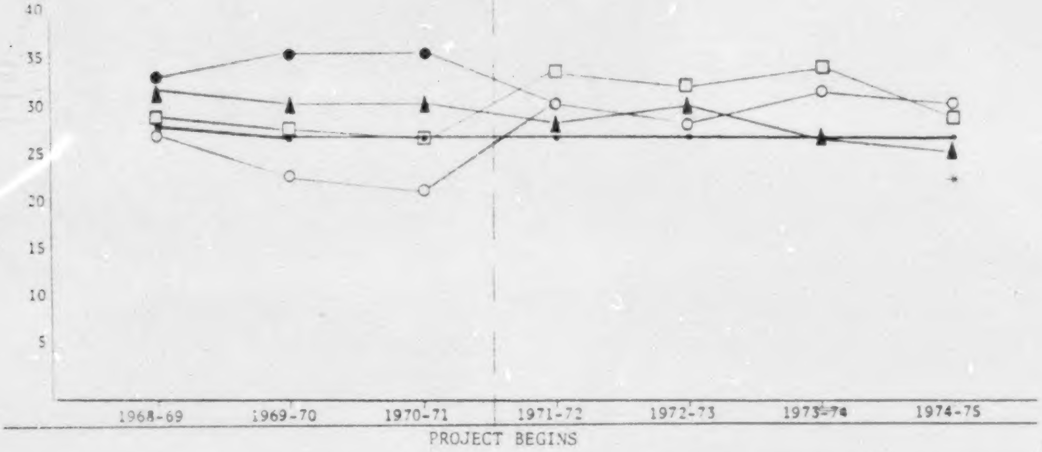
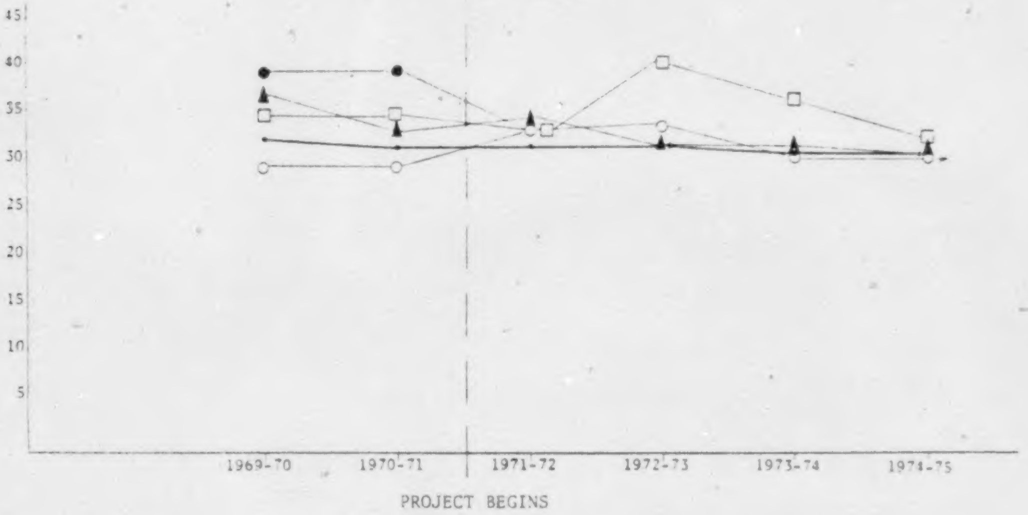


FIGURE 14

GATES (GRADE SIX) VOCABULARY
MEDIAN RAW SCORE



It is important to note that SEA did not claim that alternative schools would improve overall student performance in basic skills. The goal was to find alternative means of providing instruction in basic skills that would maintain current levels, through means consistent with the larger philosophy of the alternative. Further, it was not the intent of SEA to find the one alternative best for all students. The alternatives structure of choice of school attended was an attempt to match students with the approach best for each individual. In the next section we examine the effects on students of changing from one alternative to another in an attempt to improve the match between students and programs.

Choice: Characteristics and Consequences

Student mobility is a central component of an alternatives system. SEA developed an elaborate parent information system, busing schedule and procedures for transferring to facilitate informed choices among alternatives and student movement across the cluster of elementary options. (The logistics of providing a system of choice are discussed in Chapter Three.) The purpose of this section is to examine the extent to which students and parents utilized the opportunity to attend a non-neighborhood school and to change from one alternative to another. Further, we are interested in the characteristics of "changers" as a group and the effects on students after changing from one alternative to another.*

Use of Alternative Systems

One of the most frequently asked questions in SEA by visiting educators has been the extent to which parents and students selected a non-neighborhood school among the alternatives. Perhaps the underlying question is: Were program differences perceived real enough and important enough to send students to a non-neighborhood school? Within SEA, three sources of information speak to this question: (1) the sources of information used by parents to select an alternative, (2) the percent of students in SEA who attended non-neighborhood schools, and (3) the frequency of changing among alternatives and the reasons for doing so.

In SEA, parents reported that visiting schools was the most valuable source of information about schools, compared to more indirect methods such as use of school brochure, community meetings and articles in the SEA Newspaper (Almen, 1974c). In 1974, for example, the 602 parents responding to the internal evaluation survey reported the following:

1. 46% had visited Open School;
2. 43% had visited Continuous Progress School (grades 4-6);
3. 39% had visited Contemporary School;
4. 30% had visited Continuous Progress School (grades K-3);
5. 24% had visited Free School (Almen, 1974c).

Visiting afforded an opportunity for parents and students to discuss particular programs and, in some instances, to have a different alternative recommended as better suited for particular students. It is important to emphasize to those who would criticize parents and students' ability to select an appropriate instructional program, that in SEA, program selection was not isolated from, but in conjunction with school personnel.

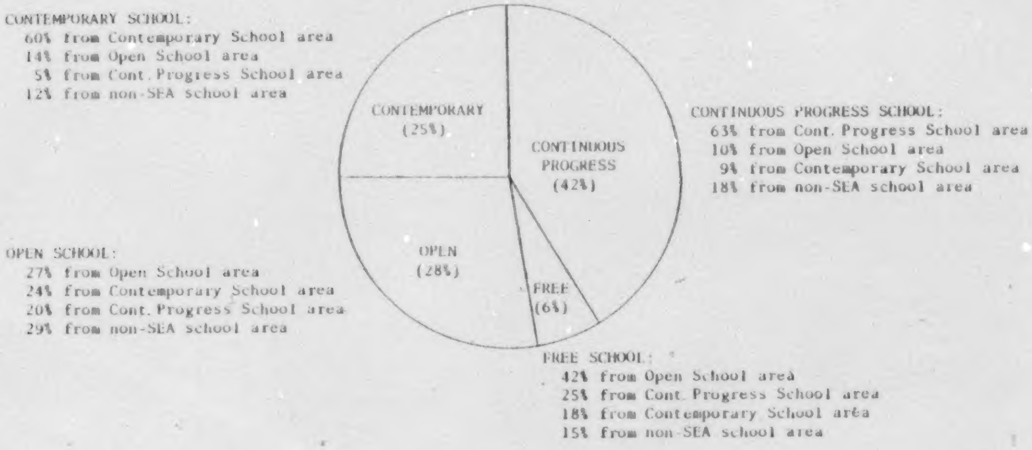
---

*This section is derived from the studies of French (1975b) and French and Crabill (1975).

Throughout the project, the internal evaluation has monitored the attendance area from which students at each alternative are drawn. After some initial increases, non-neighborhood school attendance has stabilized at about 17% for students living in Southeast. Examination of these data provide several interesting insights into the nature of choice in SEA (see Figure 15).

FIGURE 15

SEA ELEMENTARY ENROLLMENT
BY ALTERNATIVES AND RESIDENCE AREA (1974)



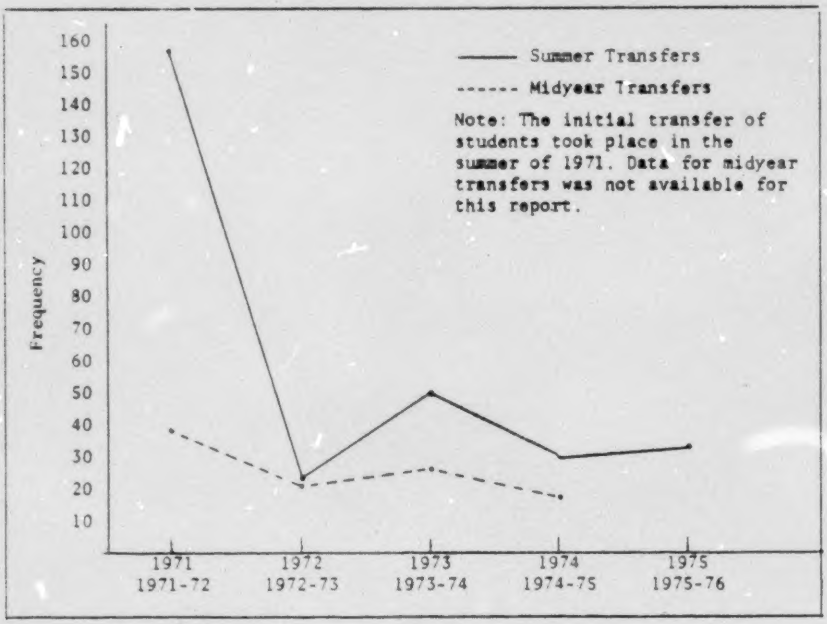
NOTE: This figure is adapted from Kocher (1975).

The Open School had the most equal distribution of students among the attendance areas. (Free School did not have an attendance area because it was a newly created program with the inception of SEA.) Both Contemporary School and Continuous Progress School drew most heavily from their own attendance area and least from each other's attendance areas. This would suggest that parents did not perceive great differences between the Contemporary and Continuous Progress schools. As we discussed earlier in this chapter, students also perceived the programs of these two alternatives as most similar within SEA. It would appear that the greater the perceived differences among alternatives, the greater the willingness of parents and students to select a non-neighborhood school.

The frequency of transferring from one alternative to another also provides insight into the utilization of choice in SEA. Since the initial reshuffling in the summer of 1971, the number of transfers has remained fairly constant (see Figure 16). Considering summer and midyear transfers separately, the number of changes has ranged between 20 and 50 students. The transferring has occurred within the context of an elementary school system of roughly 950 to 1,050 students (Almen and Rawitsch, 1974). Thus, about 5% to 10% of the elementary students have transferred each year.

FIGURE 16

TRANSFERS 1971-75



Note: The initial transfer of students took place in the summer of 1971. Data for midyear transfers was not available for this report.

Also, it should be added that the transfers do not appear controlled by the students' residence area. After the initial reordering of students at the beginning of SEA, transfers did not simply return to neighborhood schools. In fact, where data is available, less then twenty percent of the transfers represented a return to neighborhood schools. Roughly the same percent of students switched away from their neighborhood school and the percent who switched from one to another non-neighborhood school.

It is important to note that several differences exist between midyear and summer transfers, i.e., the two groups transfer for different reasons and they transfer to different types of alternatives. Examining the reasons stated by parents for summer and midyear transfers, there is greater specificity and urgency in the reasons listed for midyear transfers. More emphasis is sought in reading and mathematics as well as greater direction from teachers. Concerns also center on discipline and peer relationships.*

---

*For further information, the reader is referred to Almen (1974a) and Kocher (1975a).

TABLE 4

PARENT REASONS FOR TRANSFERRING AMONG ALTERNATIVES (1974)

Rank	Summer Transfer Reasons
1*	Hoped the new school would interest child more
2	Wanted greater emphasis on child becoming self-directed
3**	Wanted school with more personal help in learning
4	Wanted school with greater challenge
5	Child wasn't doing as well as expected in previous school

Rank	Midyear Transfer Reasons
1	Wanted more direction from teachers about what is to be learned
2	Wanted more emphasis on reading, math
2*	Hoped new school would interest child more
4	Wasn't getting along with students at previous school
5	Wanted school with more emphasis on discipline
5**	Wanted school with more personal help in learning

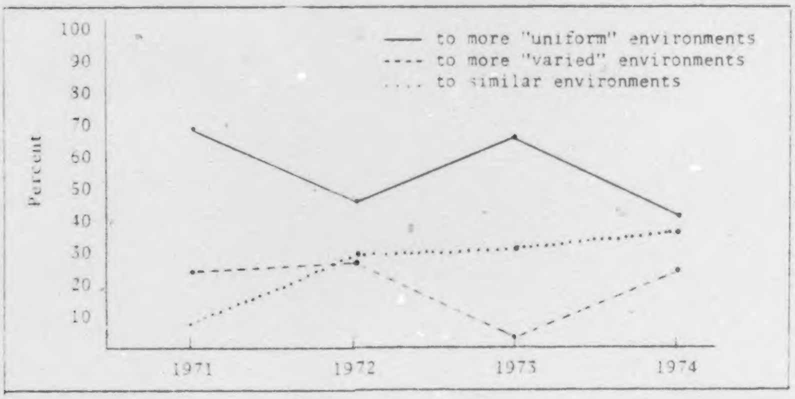
(Note: Reasons marked with (*) and (**) were cited by parents of both summer and midyear transfers.)

Summer and midyear transfers also differ in patterns of transferring among the alternatives. Giannotta's method of comparing school environments (see Chapter Four) facilitates grouping of the alternative schools for analysis. Considering the use of groups and space and the nature of activities, the Free and Open schools provide a more varied environment for students. The Contemporary and Continuous Progress schools provide students with a more uniform environment. By using this classification, transfers can be treated as moving to a more uniform or more varied school environment. For example, a change from the Continuous Progress to the Open school would be considered a move to a more varied environment. A move from the Open to the Free school would be considered a move to a similar environment.

The pattern of transferring by midyear transfers is consistent with the reasons expressed by parents of midyear transfers. In a desire for more direction from teachers and more emphasis in reading, math and discipline, midyear transfers are predominantly to more "uniform" environments:

FIGURE 17

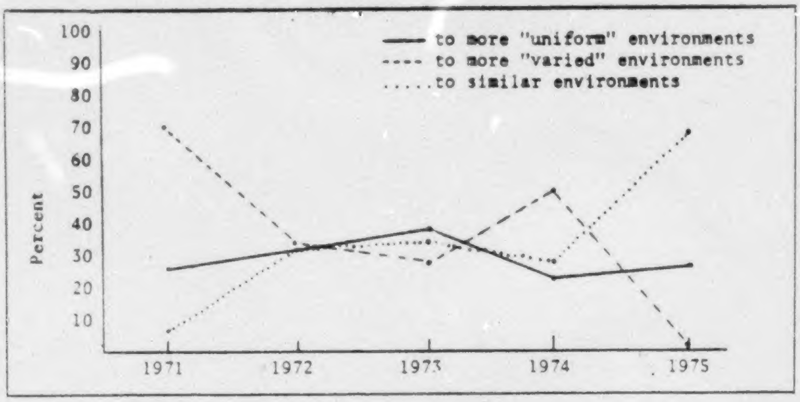
DIRECTION OF MIDYEAR TRANSFERS



Summer transfers, in contrast to midyear transfers, have shown a change in trend over the five years of SEA. At first, there was a great willingness to transfer to the less traditional programs with more varied school environments. Transfers to more similar environments were low. By the end of the project, however, summer transfers were mostly to alternatives with similar environments.

FIGURE 18

DIRECTION OF SUMMER TRANSFERS



In sum, the use of the system of choice in SEA seems to have stabilized relatively early in the project. While parents and students had the opportunity to select "less traditional" alternatives, they were able to return to the "more traditional" programs when desired. And finally, parents' reasons for changing alternatives were consistent with observed differences among the instructional programs, i.e., informed choice was possible.

Effects of Transferring

To determine the effects on students of transferring among alternatives, three variables were selected for study: (1) the attendance rates of students, (2) the three areas of the Affective Survey, and (3) the objectives-based tests in reading and mathematics. As an initial step in this analysis, we first examined whether there were differences in the frequency of transferring between primary and intermediate students. Some of the transfers involved long bus rides, and it was hypothesized that the changers as a group would consist mostly of older children. This expected difference was not supported by the results. While the numbers of primary and intermediate students were similar, we were forced to examine the effects of transferring only for primary students.*

---

*Originally, it had been planned to use intermediate students in the analysis of possible effects of transferring. Intermediate objectives-based tests had remained virtually unchanged after the first administration during the second year of the project, while it had been necessary to make two revisions of the primary reading test (French and Reynolds, 1974; French and Allison, 1975). Also, psychometric characteristics of the affective survey favored use of the intermediate form for further research efforts. Sample size was not adequate to proceed with the analyses using intermediate students, therefore, and it was necessary to use results from the primary mathematics test and the primary form of the affective survey.

Two types of comparisons were made. First, changers and non-changers (control group) were compared to determine if there were possible differences between these two groups before, and one year after, the change occurred. Second, matched t-tests were done—using the same students—to examine for the possibility of changes in performance or attitudes during the school year after transferring. Similar tests compared the performance and attitudes of the control group members, who remained in the same alternative school in both years.

There were pretest differences in attitude between the changers and non-changers. The global score for the affective survey was significantly lower for the changers (1 Tailed t-test, $t = -2.03$, $df = 70$, $p < .05$). Two of the three subscales of the survey showed similar trends. The changer's attitude toward school was significantly lower ($t = -1.74$, $df = 70$, $p < .05$). The subscale for participation descriptors showed differences in the same direction ($t = -2.22$, $p < .05$). There were no differences in the self concept scale of the affective survey—posited at least under control of schools in an earlier discussion—or in the objectives-based tests of mathematics and reading. (A substantially revised reading test was used for posttest comparisons.) Also, the changers were absent significantly more than the non-changers (17.6 days for changers; 10.2 days for non-changers, $t = 2.09$, $p < .05$).

None of the possible posttest differences between changers and non-changers were significant. This finding was in agreement with the hypothesis that the opportunity for transferring should make for a better match between student and school, resulting in better performance and more positive attitudes toward school. This was tested using 2-tailed tests, assuming there would be no difference between changers and non-changers following the transfers. The performance of the non-changers was higher in reading, although it did not reach significance ($t = -1.96$, $df = 19.55$, $p < .10$). There were no significant posttest differences in affect or attendance.

Comparing changers with themselves, before and after transferring, one difference was significant. The performance in mathematics was higher following transfer (match t-test, $t = -2.25$, $df = 12$, $p < .05$). Non-changers performance in mathematics was also higher the second year ($t = -4.26$, $p < .001$). The performance in reading was not compared, due to the change in the test.

In summary, before transferring, changers showed a less positive attitude toward their school experience and poorer attendance. After transferring, no significant differences existed between the changers and their peers who had remained in the same school for both years. Both changers and non-changers performed at significantly higher levels in mathematics the second year—the difference in performance being even more pronounced for non-changers. (This is not surprising considering the specific skills in mathematics and the longer exposure of non-changers to the same mathematics program.)

It is unfortunate that the analyses of the effects of changing are suggestive rather than conclusive because of the small sample and inability to use the more adequate instruments at the intermediate level. It does appear, however, that there are measurable effects of changing alternatives—at least in SEA. The results as they stand are tantalizing—a change in both affect and attendance due to changing schools! Should similar systems of choice be established in the future, it would be important to track students using the system and to monitor the possible effects of student mobility.

Monitoring Instructional Effects

In this chapter, we have tried to demonstrate a variety of issues that can be addressed when assessing the consequences of alternative instructional programs. These issues stem in part from the unique monitoring demands of alternative schools and in part from a desire to adopt different means of judging the effects of schooling. In sum, however, they demonstrate that alternative schools will increase the information demands of parents and the information needs of school personnel. Because most schools are not likely to have the resources for as intense an evaluation effort as SEA, it is necessary to reduce the costs of monitoring instructional effects by examining a limited number of data sources from a variety of perspectives. In this chapter, four major data sources were reported—student perceptions, basic skills performance, affective survey results and student transfer data. From these data, answers can be provided to the following questions:

1. Are the achievement profiles of the alternative programs similar? If not, what are the potential reasons, i.e., is selective enrollment operating?
2. Do students differ in attitudes towards the day-to-day experiences of being in school? Are there school-wide changes over time and is this potentially a consequence of program changes and/or staff morale?
3. In what ways do instructional programs differ as perceived by students and are their perceptions congruent with program intent and/or adult perspectives?
4. Are parents and students attending non-neighborhood schools in sufficient frequency to justify the provision of alternatives?
5. What is the frequency of student transfers? Are there trends in transferring and are they stable or changing? What are the reasons for transferring and do they provide insight into differences among school programs as perceived by parents? Are these perceptions consistent with observed differences?
6. Are changers different from non-changers and what are the effects of changing from one alternative to another?
7. What are the agreed upon means of measuring goals common to all alternatives; e.g., should basic skills be measured by objectives-based tests or by standardized achievement tests?

While this listing is not exhaustive, it does provide a sample of questions likely to be posed by parents when seeking information about the consequences of sending individual students to different alternatives. It also suggests the information likely to be required by school staff in justifying the provision and maintenance of a system of alternatives.

CHAPTER SIX

PROGRAM SURVIVAL

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the final phases of SEA under federal funding and the local factors influencing its future directions as an alternative schools program. The discussion will complement that of Chapter Two—Program Conceptualization. In 1971, several factors stemming from the Southeast community and the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) influenced the initiation and definition of SEA. By 1976, SEA existed within a different context as federal support was ending. As we will discuss, this context posed considerable challenge and difficulty as SEA sought to maintain its alternative school program. The discussion also is related to the section on governance and advisory groups in Chapter Three, indicating how the decision-making role of the combined professional and parent community of SEA further increased during the final year of the project.

This discussion is in response to the concerns of numerous educators and funding agencies who have asked, "What happens when the money goes away?" As we discussed, money was only one facet of the problem for SEA. Indeed, the entire range of factors supporting the creation of SEA had changed.

Specifically, the chapter will first describe the reorganization of SEA, i.e., the process by which SEA lost its administrative autonomy and was assimilated into the larger administrative structure of the Minneapolis Public School structure. Second, we examine the governance structures of SEA during its final year, focusing on the merger of the Management Team and Southeast Council. Third, we examine the activities of the new Southeast Council in response to external factors threatening the survival of SEA.* Our final discussion of this chapter will address the broader demands of "stabilizing the program" in our model of change and the need to continually diagnose the context of change and adapt innovative programs to the context of influence in which they exist.

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*These sections are derived from a special study during the final year of SEA (Mueller, 1976) following earlier work (Rider, 1975). The study focused on the dynamics of SEA from December 1974 through March 1976. Data were gathered by interviews with participants involved in SEA governance since the beginning of the project, field notes from observations of SEA governance meetings and examination of relevant documents.

Reorganization

As described in Chapter Two, the Minneapolis Public Schools were reorganized into three areas (North, East and West) in 1973 to achieve the district's goal of administrative decentralization. While SEA was initially left autonomous, the Superintendent mandated that SEA would be merged with one of the three areas during the third year of the project (1973-74). At that time, the SEA community felt a merger would seriously jeopardize SEA's independence during what was considered still a formative stage. The increased number of meetings, potential conflict, and the energy required to interact with another level of bureaucracy would be a serious drain on the time and energy needed to further refine and strengthen SEA goals. Concerns included whether community groups in Southeast would survive under a larger administrative umbrella, funding of key staff as federal dollars ran out, the potential closing of school buildings in Southeast and the responsiveness of the administration to local concerns (Nelson, 1975a).

As a result of these concerns, the Southeast Council (SEC) presented a position paper to the Superintendent recommending that SEA remain a separate administrative area for the duration of the project. This request elicited the following response:

> The decision on an administrative area was to be decided in June, 1974, by the Superintendent, to be announced in January of 1975 and implemented in September 1975. Subsequently, the decision was postponed by the Superintendent and the issue remained active into fall, 1974" (Nelson, 1975a:146).

An Area Decision Committee was established by the SEC as early as September 1974. The membership of this committee consisted of two representatives of community groups, the SEC chairperson, two SEA faculty members, and a parent from one of the SEA Parent Advisory Councils. The charge to this committee involved the crucial task of gathering information, as stated in the October 1974 issue of the SEA Newsletter:

> The Committee will meet with (the Superintendent) and other Minneapolis personnel in an attempt to learn more about educational programs and participatory decision-making in the three areas. The information gathered will assist the SEC in determining its final recommendation.

The situation of SEA in the fall of 1974 is clearly depicted in the SEA Newsletter dated November 1974. The SEC had been asked by the MPS Superintendent to make a recommendation concerning choice of area and the process, described below, was initiated.

> The Task
>
> (The Superintendent) has asked the Southeast Council to prepare by early December a recommendation regarding the administrative merger of Southeast Alternatives with one of the three larger areas—East, North or West. The Southeast Council invites school community groups to review this area decision issue between now and December 8. Council members will be glad to attend

> further meetings devoted to considering this important matter. The Council further requests that SEA school community groups determine their own preferences on the area decision matter and submit a written statement to the Council before or at the December 9 meeting.... The Council's position will be presented that week to (the Superintendent) for his consideration and, we would hope, concurrence.
>
> ### The Work of the Council
>
> In keeping with the Superintendent's request, the Southeast Council has worked throughout the fall months to gather pertinent information about the three areas as well as to solicit the opinions of Southeast Alternatives school community groups. The three area Superintendents made presentations and answered many questions on November 11 at an open community Southeast Council meeting. At its all day Saturday November 16 open community meeting, the Southeast Council made a tentative decision to request a merger with the West Area in July, 1975 (SEA Newsletter, November 1974).

The rationale for the decision by the SEC to merge with the West Area centered mainly on issues of compatability.

> At the Southeast Council's November 11 meeting, the three Area Superintendents responded openly and frankly to all questions posed. Their responsiveness has assisted the Council's effort greatly in reaching an area preference. The major compelling reasons for favoring the SEA merger with the West Area follow:
>
> 1. SEA Organizational Compatability with the West Area Structure
>
>   The West Area is developing a K-12 cluster pattern similar to that used in SEA as a unit of five schools. This organizational compatability with the West Area will help further SEA's development of an interdependent K-12 organization. Neither the North or East Areas has developed this type of K-12 organization and neither seems about to restructure its present patterns. To place SEA in another kind of structure would be incompatible with the SEA project which has been supported by the School Board since 1971.
>
> 2. Governance of SEA schools
>
>   The style of community participation as exemplified in the management team and advisory councils seems more likely to continue given the K-12 cluster patterns developing in the West Area. Preserving the benefits that accrue from the cooperative budgetary and program decision making by the K-12 management team is the key to the effective organization of SEA. The Council regards this as one of the most crucial factors in its tentative recommendation.

3. Facilitation of K-12 Educational Programming

Given the K-12 cluster pattern of organization developing in the West Area, the Southeast Council feels that the likelihood of further SEA K-12 programming will best take place in the West Area. Experience has shown that unless a K-12 organizational pattern has been initiated, this type of K-12 curriculum articulation and K-12 learning environment continuity just doesn't happen.

4. Commitment to Continuing Curriculum Materials which are Compatible with Different Alternative Programs

All three Area Superintendents agreed that the use of curriculum materials and practices which have proved successful will be continued.

5. Willingness of West Area Superintendent to Encourage SEA Merger

The West Area Superintendent indicated a personal willingness and readiness to invite SEA to join that Area. The East and North Area Superintendents neither encouraged SEA to merge or discouraged a merger. The frankness of the three Area Superintendents is appreciated. All three Area Superintendents already carry heavy responsibilities for some 25-30 schools each.

6. Willingness of West Area Groups and Individuals to have SEA Merge

Throughout numerous meetings, discussions and contacts with East, North, and West Area residents, staffs and principals, it is the overwhelming feeling of the Southeast Council that West Area individuals were favorable toward SEA joining the West Area. Several persons took the initiative to encourage SEA's participation.

7. Commitment to the Five SEA Alternative Schools and Continuation of Citywide Transfer Policies

All three Area Superintendents spoke in favor of the five alternative schools with parent and student options in SEA and the continuation of all citywide student transfer policies that affect SEA's enrollments (urban transfers, SEA open enrollment transfers, and principal's agreement transfers).

8. Continuation of Staff/Parent Screening Committees for SEA Principals and Faculty Openings

The West Area supports the continuation of these present SEA procedures of vital school community involvement. Simliar procedures have been used at some other West Area schools, but not in the East or North Areas to our knowledge. The East and North Area Superintendents

> appeared to have more reservations in this matter, but both were willing to review specific procedures at a later date.
>
> In view of these considerations, the Southeast Council has reached a clear preference for merger with the West Area (SEA Newsletter, November 1974).

Efforts of the Area Decision Committee, the SEC and the SEA Director verified that West Area was the most receptive to SEA goals. Meetings with West Area advisory groups confirmed that the West Area was moving in a direction compatible with the SEA governance structure and meetings between the SEA Director and the West Area Superintendent affirmed a commitment to SEA goals.

On December 11, the Superintendent of the MPS System approved the Council's recommendation. Given that the Superintendent preferred a merger with another area, his approval of the recommendation indicated the extent to which SEA, and community participation in decision-making as evidenced through the SEC, had successfully evolved to a position of strength.

New Governance Structures

The 1975-76 school year signaled the end of SEA's status as an autonomous administrative unit within MPS. While SEA retained its identity as an Experimental Schools Project funded by the National Institute of Education, it was in the initial phase of losing its privileged status as it was assimilated into the West Area cluster pattern. As stated by the superintendent of the MPS system, "SEA needs to become a part of the decentralized administrative structure in order to demonstrate that an experimental alternative school cluster can operate within the public school system," and "SEA's impact on the public school system would be greater as an integral part of one of the three areas" (SEA Newsletter; November 1974). Both factors were to play an important role in the dynamics of the decentralization process through the merger with the West Area.

SEA merged with an area comprised of four clusters, i.e., four high schools with feeder junior high and elementary schools. In keeping with the Minneapolis Board of Education decision to bring administrative decision-making closer to students, staff and community, the West Area had organized into a horizontal structure of advisory groups. Advising and consulting with the Superintendent of the West Area were advisory councils representing principals, teachers, aides, parents, clerical workers and school engineers. These groups met regularly with the superintendent. They did not, however, meet with each other officially and there was little communication between the groups.

The SEA governance structure during the first year of the merger was in a state of evolution. Significant changes were taking place at two levels which would be crucial to the outcome of the interaction process within the West Area. Specifically, the director of four years had resigned, leaving SEA with a new director for the last year of the project. Concurrently, the formerly parallel governing bodies, the Southeast Council and the Management Team, were undertaking the first year of an experimental, precedent-setting merger.

Selection of New SEA Director

The process by which the new SEA Director was chosen set a precedent for community involvement in decisions of this magnitude. The process began in the spring of 1975, when the then current director had announced his resignation. The process of selecting the new director was designed by SEA and approved by the West Area Superintendent—communication with the West Area Superintendent began when the merger decision was made.

A screening committee comprised of teachers, parents, and SEA administrators was selected by the SEC. This committee discussed and set criteria for their deliberations. Criteria of concern to the committee included: (1) experience with alternatives; (2) experience beyond the elementary level; (3) skills in building staff cohesion; (4) ability to move into unknown situations and identify concepts and needs; and (5) ability to write reports and proposals. An additional parameter set by the West Area Superintendent was that the new SEA Director have K-12 certification. He had also stated it would be desirable for the new director to have superintendent certification.

The committee developed and distributed a flyer which outlined the above. The MPS District Personnel Office was officially responsible for handling all applications for the position. Files on the applicants were kept in the personnel office for review by the screening committee. Five applications were received for the position, three of which were accepted by the personnel office after the deadline. After lengthy deliberation, the committee made its recommendation to the superintendent of the West Area. It was subsequently accepted.

Aftermath of the decision affected the internal dynamics of the SEA decision-making process. Dissension within SEA developed as a result of denying the position to one of SEA's own principals. This dissension, combined with the newness of SEA's information sharing system to the incoming director, had an eroding effect on the communication structure crucial to SEA decision-making. However, these problems gradually diminished with time.

Merger of the Southeast Council and Management Team

The goals and functioning of the Southeast Council and Management Team, two parallel SEA governing bodies, has been discussed in Chapter Three. As a brief review, the Southeast Council, which was comprised of staff, community members, students and parents, had traditionally provided "leadership to the development, maintenance and evaluation of a comprehensive educational program for the Southeast public schools" (Southeast Educational Council Bylaws, 1974). It served as an advisory body to the director—recruiting and interviewing candidates for administrative positions; annually assessing the director; reviewing evaluation reports; making recommendations for allocation of resources; and monitoring progress toward objectives of SEA. The Management Team, comprised of twelve administrators and support service directors, were organized to:

> ...consider, take action on, and provide direction for, the solution of K-12 issues; to review K-12 service center functions, positions, staff replacements and act on screening committees; to solicit and consider the advice of the Southeast Council; to review the current

> plan, contract and scope of work; decide on modifications; and, review, monitor, and give direction to SEA governance operations. In matters of finance, the team will review existing budgets and determine modifications if they seem appropriate (SEA Newsletter, August, 1974).

The decision to merge the Southeast Council and Management Team reflected themes and values underlying the SEA governance structure. One rationale for the merger was conservation of time and energy. It was felt that because a significant overlap of responsibilities existed between the two groups, a merger would provide more efficient use of time by both. A second rationale was the belief that a merger would facilitate a solid linking of parental, staff and administrative perspectives, provide diverse information and facilitate adequate decision-making. In addition, cross-group governance would decrease the likelihood of misinformation or misunderstanding of the process of decision-making, the decision itself, and the implementation of the decision. A third rationale reflected concern about the future of SEA governance after withdrawal of federal funding. It was suggested that the merged groups would be able to assume the director's functions when that position was elminiated. It was also suggested that merging the groups at this point in time would help to insure SEA unity in the future, when it would be tempting to return to a building-level orientation.

The timing of the merger seemed appropriate. Communication between the Southeast Council and Management Team had existed for two years. Two Southeast Council members had attended Management Team meetings as observers for these two years. As of 1974-75, a representative from the Management Team served as an ex-officio member on the Southeast Council. Observers to the Management Team from the Southeast Council felt comfortable in their relationship with that group. The level of sophistication, understanding of governance, and knowledge of the Southeast Council constitution was high among Southeast Council members. It was also anticipated that a merger might alleviate problems in cohesion experienced by the Management Team.

The process used in facilitating the Southeast Council/Management Team merger decision included: (1) impetus from the SEA Director and other key governance members, (2) the formation of Ad Hoc Committees from both Southeast Council and Management Team, (3) reviews of issues and potential models to the larger groups, (4) communication with the public, (5) surveys of the community's commitment to the governance structure, (6) lengthy deliberations by the committees on questions of membership, and (7) agreement on one model by consensus of both groups.

The merger has been viewed as an experiment by SEA and has not been without its problems. A variety of issues have contributed to the ineffectiveness of the merged organization during the first portion of the 1975-76 school year. One, the principals began meeting with the director separately early in the year. These meetings occurred partly because the principals felt that necessary tasks had not been accomplished at larger meetings and desired to accomplish them as they had done traditionally. Also, the new director felt a need for assistance as he moved into a new role. At times the reasons were known to the larger group and at other times they were not, causing mistrust and discomfort on the part of the Southeast Council, especially among newer members and the K-12 support staff.

Another issue was that of new membership. A significant number of Southeast Council members were new and consequently had little sense of the tradition of the council. They did not fully understand the goals and rationale for the merger. As a result, they were often confused about their roles and questioned their effectiveness as participants. Seasoned council members did not have adequate time for maintenance activities which could have alleviated these problems. Hidden agendas and personality conflicts were also contributing factors (as perceived by various members).

It is our opinion that the problems of the Council had more to do with its circumstances than its goals, structures or personnel. Timing was not good. While the experiment of a combined professional and community governance group was noble, it seemed to be created as a "now or never" proposition. If the project itself had been stable, then the early interaction between the two SEA-wide governance groups and their collective skills in group decision making would have been maximized. The project, however, was experiencing a psychological wind-down that paralleled fiscal reductions. As the future became more uncertain, individuals became more self-centered, more concerned about their own survival in terms of employment or changes in roles and status. As individuals focused on their own needs, the resources of the group in terms of creativity, communication skills and personal leadership declined. The project and its participants were in exit (Tesmer and Reynolds, 1976).

While the needs of the new Council were to focus on internal issues, particularly building relationships, trust and a new group identity, the demands on the Council were to attend to numerous external issues.

Survival in a Changing Environment

Perhaps the entire mission of the SEC during the 1975-76 school year was to assure the survival of SEA, i.e., to secure adequate funds for 1976-77, when federal funds would no longer be available.

> The Council has taken a realistic appraisal of what SEA will look like at the end of federal funding. Although the models and processes of alternatives are firmly established, the Council notes that at the end of federal funding the following resources will not be available:
>
> SEA schools will have no director or representative on the Superintendent's Cabinet. There will be no K-12 resource consultants in the areas of math, science, industrial arts, drama, evaluation, deliberate psychological education, language arts, etc. In addition, the Teacher Center funds for staff development would no longer be available except through an Area. At the end of this school year, June, 1975, some 40 federally funded positions will be phased out. The federal budget will drop from one million dollars this school year to $500,000 for 1975-76. There will be no federal dollars the following year, 1976-77. We will then be dependent on the regular Minneapolis budget (SEA Newsletter, November 1974).

A sequence of events occurred within MPS which made SEA even more vulnerable in its dependence on the MPS budget than initially anticipated. First was a critical loss of top administrative advocacy at the system-wide level. The superintendent of the Minneapolis Public Schools resigned during the 1974-75 school year, effective August 1975. During eight years in Minneapolis, he had been the guiding force behind administrative decentralization, actively interested in and supportive of alternative schools and instrumental in securing the federal funding for SEA. Also, one of his senior assistants resigned to assume the superintendency in another city.

As a result, the central administration was in a state of flux and uncertainty in the fall of 1975. The new superintendent would not be chosen until December. For SEA, influence was further eroded because the SEA director no longer held a position of the Superintendent's Cabinet. The loss of this position was compatible with the goals of decentralization, i.e., SEA was now a cluster and not all cluster directors could reasonably be expected to have cabinet positions. Consequently, SEA lost its direct link to the central administration of MPS and was officially cut off from another source of influence.

The SEC initiated the budget process in November of 1975. Buildings prioritized needs and submitted budget proposals, each using a different process and involving community participation in varying degrees. These proposals were organized by the director into the SEA Budget Proposal, 1976-77, which was presented at a meeting of the SEC in December. It is interesting to note that all of the SEA buildings listed classroom aides as their priority budget item. This budget proposal did not speak to the issue of SEA-wide support services, such as Community Education and Community Resource Coordinators. These were presented in a later proposal to avoid distractions from a building "necessities" orientation. The SEC reviewed the proposal and agreed by consensus that the director should present it to the West Area Superintendent.

As in previous years, the SEA budget proposal was presented in December, long before other schools had compiled their budgets. The West Area Superintendent stated that he would accept the budget proposal as it stood and would present it to the Cabinet without making revisions. He fully supported the SEA budget process.

The resignation of the superintendent of MPS was to have yet further consequences. It indirectly influenced the unanticipated resignation of the superintendent of the West Area in February of 1976. He had applied for the position of superintendent of MPS without success and subsequently resigned. His support of SEA had been considerable, indeed he may have been the primary reason for SEA desiring location within the West Area. He was replaced by an interim superintendent who had been his assistant. However, she was generally considered to be more conservative and less sympathetic to the goals of alternatives than the superintendent she replaced. Appointment of a permanent superintendent to the West Area would be made by the new MPS superintendent and would not occur in time to provide SEA with an advocate in budget negotiations. The new MPS superintendent would be available only as a consultant until he assumed full-time duties in May of 1976. In short, SEA was now on its own.

The situation further eroded when five-million dollar budget deficit was announced in early March. A summary of the proposed budget cuts released by the West Area Superintendent's office showed that $160,628 would be cut from SEA's budget. These cuts would include classroom aides, resource teachers, and inservice funds. It appeared from this first round of the MPS budget process that SEA was in danger of losing its highest program priorities.

The proposed budget cuts were in direct contradiction to statements made by the MPS Board. A lengthy article in a Minneapolis newspaper on March 8, 1976 outlined the Board's desire to make budget cuts as far away from the classroom as possible. The statements indicated that classroom programs would not suffer. Suggested alternatives to the initial proposal mentioned in the article included cutting administrators and reducing the work year of principals and assistant principals. However, another newspaper article, published several days later, announced that approximately 360 teacher positions would be cut and approximately 15 principals and another 30 administrators would be demoted from positions for which they were not tenured. SEA stood to lose 4 of its 5 principals. While the situation was potentially disastrous to SEA, there were some who believed that the administration's approach was essentially alarmist. Whatever the reality of the proposed cuts, the SEC mobilized to influence the outcome of the MPS budget process.

The strategy taken by the SEC was to attempt to hold the Board and Administration to their statements that cuts would be made "away from classrooms." The first step taken involved linking the SEC more firmly with the Citywide Task Force on Alternatives, a committee which had been appointed by the former superintendent to take primary responsibility in exploring and making recommendations concerning alternatives throughout the city. A significant number of SEA people had been involved with the Task Force. Although the group had wielded some power with the former superintendent, at this point in time the Task Force was in a state of limbo. The group had met with the new superintendent but received no feedback from him concerning their official status. There was some feeling that the new superintendent was not knowledgeable of, or sympathetic to, alternatives. However, the group continued to meet and make itself visible to the superintendent, hoping to influence when and where it could.

Both the Citywide Task Force on Alternatives and the SEC expressed concern about the nature of the proposed budget cuts. Representatives from both groups met together to discuss the proposed cuts. They chose a strategy of making recommendations to the MPS Board which emphasized making cuts away from classrooms; requested that the Board reaffirm its commitment to school district goals, alternatives, and affirmative action; and suggested that true decentralization might be a solution to budget cuts.

Another step taken involved the West Area Parents Advisory Council. This group was becoming actively involved in budget considerations for the first time. Their involvement included an attempt to ask all buildings to prioritize their needs; and somewhat vigorous and vocal statements by members concerning the nature of the budget cuts. The members of this group also felt that cuts should be made "away from classrooms."

Another step taken by the SEA director to advocate SEA priorities was a presentation of the SEA Budget Proposal to the new superintendent of the MPS. He also indicated that the community had been actively involved in the process of formulating the proposal. While no commitment of any kind was made by the Superintendent, the meeting served to increase his awareness of SEA and alternatives.

It is impossible to predict the outcome of the budget negotiations at this time. As is true of every school in the MPS system, SEA faces possible loss of staff and facilities of a magnitude which could seriously affect the quality and type of educational programs offered.

As of this writing in June of 1976, the future of Southeast Alternatives is unknown. A meeting, jointly sponsored by SEA and the Southeast Minneapolis Planning and Coordinating Committee (SEMPACC), is scheduled for mid-June. The flyer announcing the meeting asks in bold type: "Southeast Schools—What will happen? How much will be spent?" It announces that a report will be submitted to the school board in late June by the citywide facilities committee. The age of SEA's buildings (among the oldest in the district) was not an issue in 1971; as a separate issue, it may mean the end of SEA.

The announcement reads:

> The future of our school buildings will be determined by their report and the school board's implementation of their suggestions....This is our opportunity to voice our concerns before the report goes to the school board.

Community involvement was a significant force in the creation of SEA; it will be significant in its adaptation to future problems and opportunities.

Stabilizing the Program

The major concern of many participants and observers of SEA has been the effect of the program once federal support was withdrawn. This concern was justified because innovative programs are typically of the "add-on" variety. That is, while dominant instructional organizations and programs remain unchanged, they are supplemented by additional staff, programs, equipment, supplies and training. When external support ends, local districts have the option to pick-up these additional costs. Frequently, local districts perceive these programs as luxuries they cannot afford and the "add-on" is "taken-away."

While this action may reflect the true worth of an innovative program—education has a history of special programs which fail to achieve that which they initially claim—even a valued program may have to be discontinued. For example, SEA existed in a system which had over $10 million worth of federally-supported projects in 1976. Certainly Minneapolis Public Schools would not have been able, even under the better financial conditions of 1971, to have continued all of these programs at local expense.

It is to the credit of SEA, MPS and the NIE that this concern emerged early in the program. Budget reductions in federal monies were planned during the last half of the project to facilitate a phase-out; e.g., federal support during the fifth and final year was about half of that during the fourth year. By the fifth year, however, SEA existed within a different environment: (1) administrative leadership at several levels had changed, (2) the age of buildings had increased concerns about their safety and adequacy, and (3) declining enrollments and related fiscal reductions called for district-wide responses. The loss of federal monies was compounded by a loss of local monies; decision making would be carried out by persons with perhaps different priorities but certainly with different district-wide problems requiring resolution.

SEA, however, did have a strategy to facilitate survival. As we have argued in Chapter Two, SEA was a success because it avoided specific innovations, focusing instead on the general goals and structure of alternative schools. Its *initial* changes were significant and permanent; e.g., changes in the selection of school by parent and student choice and changes in the organization's and community's expectations of schools to alternative instructional programs. These decisions *increased* the flexibility of the organization to identify and change program specifics. This flexibility has also *reduced* SEA's dependence on program specifics and enhanced the ability to adapt to changing fiscal support. The value of the planned budget reductions have been to force SEA to continually change program specifics while maintaining the central components of alternative schools. In other words, SEA was forced to become educated in the process of change.

The challenge of the future for SEA is to find ways to continually adapt. The danger for SEA is that they will become attached to program specifics (e.g., a particular building or staff position) and fail to utilize their flexibility.

In sum, stabilizing instructional programs at the end of a project may require *early* structural and procedural changes that are not directly dependent upon additional monies. The task for staff of state and federal agencies is to support the development of structural and procedural changes and allow flexibility in program specifics. The task for local program participants is to diagnose the context of change and to adapt the specifics of innovative programs as required.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

In our final chapter, we would like to comment first on the two major purposes and the intended audiences of the report. We will then discuss the following: (1) a summary of a process for implementing alternative schools, (2) the role of external funding in facilitating educational change, and (3) the implications of alternative schools for the structure and functioning of public education.

One of our purposes has been to report on the implementation of a locally-defined approach to educational change and the extent to which expectations of the federal program were attained. The Experimental Schools Program was intended to facilitate "comprehensive change" in educational programs of public schools. Alternative schools as defined by SEA have accomplished this end. An examination of Chapters Two through Six reveal that SEA was not typical of urban, public schools. While the results of a significant increase in funding were highly visible, SEA went beyond providing more of the same and altered the basic structure and functioning of public schools. We believe these changes were consistent with the federal intent of "comprehensive change" because they changed basic characteristics of public education—variability was legitimized and replaced expectations for standardization. SEA thereby was able to achieve an organizational flexibility to vary program specifics through decentralized decisions to best provide instructional programs consistent with divergent philosophies, values and priorities. Success in this endeavor was not unilateral throughout SEA, but it was extensive enough to draw nationwide attention and promote serious discussions about changes in the structure and functioning of public schools—a realistic accomplishment for an experimental schools program.

The second major purpose has been to identify issues, strategies and concepts of relevance and utility to educators implementing educational change in general and alternative schools in particular. To this end we have emphasized the twin goals of description and theory. A fairly extensive descriptive account was considered to have advantages for the audiences we sought to address; educators tend to think in situationally specific terms. The description of SEA was intended to provide concrete examples of "how alternative schools work" and allow the readers to (1) contrast those specifics with their own educational knowledge and experiences and (2) judge their applicability to their own setting.

A theoretical perspective was employed to guard against an overly narrow focus on the unique issues, personalities and programs of SEA. That is, we searched the literature on alternative schools and educational change for concepts and questions helpful in other educational settings and judged their utility in our analysis of SEA. We also sought input from other educators visiting SEA and drew upon our own experience in other educational settings and programs and our own studies of educational change.* The generation of a model for implementing alternative schools also was considered as facilitating the generalizability of our studies.

The potential audiences of this report included the staff of state and federal education agencies, school board members, central office and building administrators, professional support staff, teachers and parents. We believe that the typical situation in education is for participants at different levels to be rather insular and have little familiarity with or sympathy for the focal concerns of other participants. While different sections of this report may be of greater immediate concern to different audiences, we feel that a general awareness of the entire range of issues surrounding alternative schools is important at all levels of participation in public schools. SEA has demonstrated that a blurring of traditional roles and responsibilities in public schools occurs with alternative schools, community involvement and decentralized decision making. The quality of decisions in the public school arena depends upon an overall knowledge of school programs and an understanding of the factors that influence their operation, stability and change.

In our following sections, we will not attempt a complete summary or seek grand and global conclusions. Rather, we will focus upon selected issues that have been reserved as most appropriate in a closing chapter.

Implementing Alternative Schools

Throughout the report, we have referred to a seven-stage model of implementing alternative schools. Its purpose has been to organize factors considered critical in the consideration of alternative schools and their adoption. Underlying this model is the belief that successful change in education *is* possible and strategies to maximize the probability of change *can* be designed. Further, we believe that alternative schools *may not* be an appropriate basis for organizing public schools in all settings. The decision to adopt alternatives, strategies to implement them, and specific program components are *highly* dependent upon local circumstances and priorities. The following model is intended to facilitate the identification of those local factors and to assist decisions about alternative schools.

1. Diagnosis
    a. Assessing organizational momentum and existing priorities and problems of community and schools.
    b. Identifying perceived needs for variability in instructional programs.
    c. Specifying the financial, technical, professional and interpersonal resources available for change efforts.

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*For example, the author was a member of the external evaluation team in another ESP site for two years prior to directing the external evaluation team in Minneapolis, completed a case study of a differential staffing/arts centered program in an elementary school, and served as an evaluator of a Title III program in the St. Louis Public Schools.

2. Initiation	d. Involving key school and community personnel who function as planners and implementors.
3. Definition	e. Setting overall goals of alternative instructional programs.
	f. Avoiding specific innovations as strategies.
4. Implementation	g. Creating structural modifications to support alternative instructional programs.
	h. Creating mechanisms for technical support.
	i. Creating mechanisms for community support.
	j. Granting power to make decisions compatible with perceived need for change.
	k. Providing resources to operationalize change.
	l. Reducing risks of participation.
	m. Enhancing rewards of participation.
5. Monitoring Instructional Environments	n. Examining instructional environments in terms of selected dimensions.
	o. Assessing the extent to which operational programs are congruent with intent.
	p. Assessing the extent to which operational programs differ from each other.
6. Monitoring Instructional Effects	q. Identifying common and unique goals among alternatives.
	r. Selecting measurement strategies to determine student effects.
	s. Comparing measured effects and program goals.
	t. Comparing measured effects among alternatives.
	u. Comparing measured effects with instructional environments.
7. Stabilizing the Program	v. Identifying desired changes in program specifics, if any, due to monitoring instructional environments.
	w. Identifying desired changes in program specifics, if any, due to monitoring instructional effects.
	x. Identifying desired changes in program specifics, if any, due to changes in larger system of influence, e.g., school district or community.
	y. Planning strategy to implement new program specifics by diagnosis (begin process again).

The suggested model is not considered to be all inclusive or absolute. It is intended to be helpful. The model is not unique, sharing steps and factors suggested by others in the educational literature, but it does provide a summary of the experience of SEA.

Role of External Funding

The magnitude of federal funding of SEA over five years has obscured several important considerations of the role of external funding in the implementation of alternative schools and educational change in general. We will comment on four—proposals for external funding, monitoring requirements of funded programs, types of expenditures in implementing alternative schools, and the ending of funded programs.

Proposals for External Funding

Proposals to state and federal education agencies are frequently student centered. That is, certain deficiencies are defined in an existing program as evidenced by the problems of students, e.g., high dropout rates, low achievement scores or lack of job skills. Further, school districts emphasize their need for external support, e.g., teachers require new skills, special curriculum materials need to be developed or the district has in general a low pupil expenditure level. Proposals typically fail to address the probability of successful implementation; i.e., they fail to focus upon adults. The context of change and the strategy of change are not subject to analysis prior to funding. While student needs and district needs may be valid, critical and deserving attention, funding agencies do not have a realistic purchase on the probability of the local district actually implementing the proposed program. The problem of funding agencies then becomes one of trying to insure program success rather than studying its benefits. Our suggestion is that both funding agencies and local districts use the opportunity of formal proposals for change by attending to issues such as those in the proposed model of change.

Monitoring Requirements

Participation in the Experimental Schools Program required SEA to devote considerable time and energy to reporting to the funding agency. Many local districts, we feel, resist external funding because of these requirements. It is important to note, however, that the costs of an increase in administrative overhead were born by the funding agency. Further, the requirements of quarterly-status reports, site visits, re-funding proposals and notices of budget and program changes forced SEA personnel to continually examine their programs and rationales. This activity was further reinforced by federal encouragement to host visitors and disseminate project information nationally. We feel the need of SEA to explain to others what they were doing and why enhanced the overall quality of the alternative schools program.

Types of Expenditures

An examination of the types of expenditures in SEA, rather than their absolute amount, provide a basis for distinguishing between what alternatives cost SEA and what alternatives may cost in other settings.* The following categories indicate costs greater than those typically required of public schools (e.g., salaries of teachers and administrators, replacement costs of instructional materials, and funds required for buildings and grounds maintenance). From the perspective of SEA, the critical distinction is that funds were available for significant expenditures in *all* areas. From the perspective of others implementing alternatives, the emphasis given each category may vary from setting to setting and from time to time.

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*This discussion is derived from an earlier article written by the author for the SEA Journal 1971-1976 (Reynolds, 1975).

Initial Costs

These costs are associated with changes in buildings and furniture necessary to support different instructional arrangements of students and teachers. In changing to an open school program, for example, it may be necessary to remove desks, install rugs, increase light, and construct areas for specialized activities as well as purchase new furniture and supporting materials. Changes of this type *facilitate* new instructional arrangements and activities. These costs are essentially one-time costs and may be as conservative or extensive as the budget allows.

Development Costs

The largest development expense is considered to be staff training. SEA has emphasized staff training in its development of alternative schools, particularly during the first half of the project. Staff training *could* be a one-time cost, but turnover may extend this need over time in other settings. Staff stability, then, is a key to the costs involved as is the amount of training and the size of staff. As a rule, the greater the departure of the new programs from the knowledge and skills associated with previous programs, the greater the cost of training.

Supportive Costs

These costs are associated with an increase in professional staff and required services to meet new organizational and instructional needs in an alternatives system. SEA information dissemination activities have been targeted toward both the local community and visiting professional educators. An evaluation program has been implemented and the related additional staff employed. The community education program has added building coordinators and the number of aides involved in the instructional program has been increased. Each of these additional roles creates an increase in staffing and salary expense. It is believed these expenditures have been most important in producing significant changes in SEA. This category of expenditures, however, may have the largest impact on budgets of others considering similar programs.

Supplemental Costs

This category included increase in expenditures for equipment and materials similar to those of past programs, i.e., they represent "more of the same." While it may be argued that substantial additions of materials, particularly where the quantity had been inadequate, may constitute significant change, it is believed that *major* changes in instructional programs typically do not emerge from disbursements of this nature.

Nonmonetary Costs

It is strategic to consider nonmonetary costs at the same time as monetary costs to provide a realistic perspective concerning the role of money in the development of alternative schools. Much of the SEA program is not dependent upon additional funding. For instance, new governance structures per se cost little. Community involvement is an attitude and pattern of interaction, neither of which necessarily cost additional money. A sensitivity to the affective aspects of instruction does not require new instructional materials or new buildings. While money provides visible change in a program, the non-cost factors of philosophy, attitude and commitment give new programs their substantive changes.

It is essential to recognize that SEA was building on an earlier commitment to alternative schools which, without federal funds, would have resulted in a limited trial program. The additional monies supported the full implementation of alternative schools; they did not create the supportive context of the change attempt. Further, the noncost factors highlight the importance of the legitimacy of the change effort and the autonomy of SEA within the Minneapolis Public Schools. Other educators, were they to secure equal monies, could not be assured of achieving equally successful change.

Funding agencies cannot assume that significant program changes will occur as a result of increased expenditures. Further, external funds are frequently used for supplemental costs or "add-on," special programs. If this is the purpose of external funding, it should be specified. The disadvantage of "add-on" programs is that after external funding ends they are frequently "taken-away." More permanent effects of funding can be achieved, we feel, by external support for initial, developmental and supportive costs of innovative programs that also involve fundamental changes in institutional and instructional organization.

Ending Funded Programs

A frequently observed characteristic of externally funded programs is that they are introduced with great fanfare and end almost unnoticed. One of the major reasons, we feel, is that special programs psychologically end before they fiscally end (Tesmer and Reynolds, 1976). The closer to the end of the program, the more program participants become concerned about their future jobs and activities. They become more self-centered, commitment to the program decreases and program staff become more isolated from each other. Program staff may seek other special programs or types of future employment prior to a program's formal end. If opportunities are found, acceptance of a new position provides security. In contrast, the future is unknown and out-of-control for the individual by remaining with the current project during its final stages.

Key program personnel, especially recruited to staff a special project, may be most susceptible to the problems of exit. Externally-funded programs frequently provide career mobility, i.e., individuals may jump from special project to special project as a means of career enhancement. Preferring the administrative autonomy and lowered financial constraints of special projects, these persons may be less interested in program survival than other, more permanent, participants. If these key people go into exit behavior, either psychologically or physically, lower participants or new and temporary staff are faced with the problem of stabilizing the program. The survival of the program, therefore, becomes subject to influences beyond fiscal support.

We perceive a need for funding agencies and local districts to address the issues of exit during the planning stages of a new program. By dealing with the issue openly, the concerns of district personnel, program participants and funding agencies can be addressed. Planning for exit and dealing with it in an open manner may help lessen the impact of an end of external support and facilitate the adaptation of special programs to local funding.

Implications of Alternative Schools

As we discussed in Chapter One, the minor theme of Southeast Alternatives has been variability. Alternative schools are built upon and promote variability in instructional priorities, community participation, technical support, instructional environments and their effects on students. In contrast, public schools typically have emphasized standardization. We saw that it was possible to change the basic structure and functioning of public schools at the administrative level while preserving quality and equality at the instructional level. A major advantage of this strategy, we feel, is to increase the flexibility of the public school as an organization and to maximize its responsiveness to its clients.

Variability, flexibility and responsiveness are considered to be the major implications of alternative schools for the structure and functioning of public education. The consequences for public schools of these changes are (1) to increase the responsibility of the community for the quality of education and put meaning into the phrase "local control," (2) to increase the demands upon public school personnel to interact with the public in continued dialogue about the ends and means of educational programs, (3) to require new skills of teachers and administrators in communication, coordination and decision making as the public school increases in organizational complexity.

It is tempting at this point to actively advocate alternative schools. Southeast Alternatives has been an exciting program; the implementation of alternatives in other settings could be equally exciting. It is appropriate, however, to advise others to exercise caution and to examine carefully the local setting when considering the adoption of alternative schools. This report, hopefully, will aid in that process.

APPENDIX A

THE EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The Creation of the Experimental Schools Program (ESP) by the U. S. Office of Education (USOE) in 1970 was prompted by a concern with outcomes of prior educational change efforts in general and federally sponsored interventions in particular. American educational research and practice had cumulatively underscored several interrelated pitfalls in the planning and sponsorship of educational innovation, which ESP intents and programmatic design consciously sought to avoid.

After a decade marked by exceedingly high expectations, educational planners and consumers were confronted by the apparent failure of many promising curricular and program innovations to achieve significant results. Educators increasingly questioned the wisdom of "piecemeal" change strategies consisting of innovations which attempted to alter relatively discrete elements within an educational system, without concurrent and supportive system-wide change. These concerns are summarized by Worthen et al. (1972). Moreover, change strategies repeatedly encountered difficulties related to insufficient time for adequate planning, implementation and evaluation. Such trends, in turn, reflected a seemingly perennial problem of education—the lag or gap between basic educational research and actual school practices, between what is known and what is applied, between planners and implementors.

Numerous programmatic models of prior federal sponsorship efforts were available to ESP planners. These too were able to serve as input. For example, one frequently used model was the traditional "demonstration site" approach. Another was that of "planned variation" employed in such programs as Head Start and Follow Through. This enabled use of several demonstration sites, each sufficiently varied to enable the umbrella program's application to be systematically monitored for its differing payoffs in different types of settings. Still a third model was the then popular voucher plans which entailed the distribution of federal monies directly to the ultimate clients of educational delivery systems—family units—to utilize in whatever manner they saw fit. None of the above models was a "pure type" in that each often involved elements of another (e.g., Voucher Demonstration Projects). Nor were they the only models planners drew upon for insights. Tbe Office of Economic Opportunity had been engaged over the decade of the 1960's in several others, some involving the use of private educational options.

One of the principal problems encountered in all of these models was their "top down" nature, in terms of needs assessment, planning, and frequently implementation as well. Though this problem was perhaps most frequently echoed in complaints of ethnic minority groups, it was by no means limited to such clientele or settings. Having one's "needs" diagnosed, defined, and assessed; being assigned a "demonstration site" display status; or participating in a program's application (as either implementor or client) and not its initial planning simply did not facilitate what quite often were undoubtedly the best of federal intents.

The overall intents and design of ESP ultimately mirrored a discernible pattern of thrusts which attempted to partially address (not "solve") the kinds of problems discussed above. As a change strategy, ESP decided to provide an opportunity for local districts to diagnose their own problems and design a locally generated change strategy to deal with them. In preparing their proposals for potential ESP funding, however, local districts would be required to meet certain criteria. First, proposals would need to reflect a strategy of "comprehensive" as opposed to piecemeal change. That is, local program components were to impact the entire range of students in schools (K-12) and have a larger system-wide rationale. Second, funded districts were required to accommodate an ESP design encompassing three major types of evaluation: (1) formative (or Level I) conducted by local project staff to provide timely feedback to project participants; (2) summative (or Level II) conducted by agencies external to the project to provide feedback to the federal funding agency; and (c) Level III evaluation, which was tentatively scoped to explore potential themes of interest across the various ESP nationwide sites. Third, districts were expected to assume responsibility for maintaining particularly promising innovations and practices after the phase-out of federal funding (i.e., a type of "continuity of success" understanding). Fourth, ESP sites were to serve between 2,000 and 5,000 K-12 students, which would include but not necessarily be limited to a low income population (Nation's Schools, 1971).

Certain additional features of ESP operational design deserve mention. The time allotted for local program development was generous—five years. This would hopefully allow an adequate period for more rational (as opposed to bandwagon) program planning, monitoring, adjustments, and eventual institutionalization. The funding allotted to districts submitting successful proposals was equally generous, exceeding several million federal dollars per site. The amount of federal support was based upon a formula applied to current per pupil expenditure levels of the local district. Finally, ESP sites were not formally scoped, designed, or selected as national demonstration projects, pieces in a puzzle of planned variation, or large-scale fiscal vouchers. Rather, the emphasis was upon providing school districts an opportunity and fiscal capacity to generate and operationalize a plan for dealing with locally diagnosed needs in a comprehensive manner.

The Experimental Schools Program was activated in December of 1970. In the spring of 1971, school systems throughout the nation were invited by USOE to submit proposals for comprehensive change projects in their respective local districts. The initial round of competition, involving the submission of nearly 500 responses, led to the awarding of ten planning grants. Planning grants ran for sixty days during which operational proposals were prepared. Of these ten districts, three were funded for operation in the fall of 1971. These consisted of three urban districts: the Berkeley Unified School District, Berkeley, California; the Franklin Pierce School District, Piercy County, Washington; and the Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In March of 1971, a second round of competition was conducted which resulted in the funding of the Edgewood Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas, and the Greenville County School District, Greenville, South Carolina. These sites were operating by the fall of 1972. By September of 1973, ten rural sites and three street academy projects were also participating in the Experimental Schools Program. ESP thus involved ten rural and eight urban sites serving a combined total of over 25,000 students.

ESP began as a semiautonomous operation within the U.S. Office of Education. In the fall of 1972, responsibility for ESP administration shifted to the National Institute of Education (NIE). Funding was awarded to ESP sites in two major cycles consisting of initial and final thirty-month periods. Each site, as well as the agency whose services the NIE contracted for summative evaluation studies, was thus required to submit second cycle refunding proposals.

By the fifth year of ESP, formative evaluation components had been established across the various sites. Summative evaluation data was being gathered by seven independent research organizations concerning both site-specific interpretations of comprehensive change and the various projects' impact upon students, educators, and communities which they involved (Coward, 1975).

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION STUDIES OF ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

As early as the mid-1960's, researchers and practitioners in the alternatives movement were quick to foresee that new strategies of assessment would be required for alternative schools. Many traditional evaluation models, strategies, and measurement techniques were considered inappropriate to sufficiently address the range and quality of alternative schooling intents. Goals were often either too "messy" (Rosen, 1973) or too unconventional (Perrone, 1972) for available instrumentation. Further, available instrumentation largely addressed goals sometimes considered secondary in importance by alternative programs (Byers and Rawitsch, 1974). The development of strategies to address new concerns, however, are still in a relatively early stage of development. Morra (1974), in reviewing literature related to "evaluation of alternative schools," observed:

> ...There are but a few articles available. It is not at all unreasonable for the literature to be so sketchy. Philosophical, economic and manpower factors have acted to minimize work done in the evaluation of alternative schools.

Although literature on the specific topic of alternative assessment has been relatively slow to appear, there have been isolated studies of alternatives conducted primarily in the form of qualitative analyses of an entire school or program. These studies reflect a variety of disciplinary orientations. One example of such work is Anatomy of Educational Innovation by Smith and Keith (1971). This work provides a detailed analysis of the origins, growth, and decline of an innovative elementary school program, encompassing even the initial phases of building construction and staffing. Drawing upon organizational and sociological theory, and utilizing data gathered through extensive field work conducted in the school, the study offers several tentative conceptual models concerning the institutional life-cycle of an innovatory program.

Work of a similar nature is available in a series of monographs reporting on the Alternative Learning Environments Project being conducted at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). Two of these are of particular interest: (1) The Creation of Educational Settings: A Developmental Perspective (Levin and Simon, 1973a) and (b) The Irrationality of Rationalized Program Development (Levin and Simon, 1973b). The first of these offers a particularly stimulating "phase" analysis of developing educational settings, emphasizing research relating to the development of new and alternative settings. It too draws upon organizational theory, particularly the work of Seymour Sarason (1971). Neither Smith and Keith's nor the Canadian studies claim to be fully elaborated "theories," but rather analyses directed towards theory development.

Additional macro-level research focused on alternative programs has continued to appear. Among these, for example, are works by Moore et al. (1971) on the Metro School in Chicago; Riordan (1972) on the Cambridge Pilot School in Massachusetts; Cohn and Finch (1973) on two alternative high schools in St. Louis; Eriksen and Messina (1973) and Eriksen and Gantz (1974) on an alternative free school in Philadelphia, and studies by the Rand Corporation (1974) on the Educational Voucher Program in the Alum Rock School District, San Jose, California (1973).

The concerns and disciplinary perspectives of these studies have varied. For example, Cohn and Finch (1973) aimed their work at isolated societal factors which stimulate program development, as well as selected dimensions of the techniques and made use of cultural and organizational concepts in their analysis. Eriksen and Messina employed an analytical framework of "boundary maintenance" drawn from the field of anthropology—particularly the work of Barth (1969) and Eidheim (1961). The focus of their study was competing interests between community and professional education power structures in implementing an alternative school. Three additional major works have been those of (1) Graubard (1973) analyzing successes and failures of the free school movement across the nation, (2) Morra (1974) which consisted of an application of Provus' discrepancy evaluation model to a free school in Massachusetts, and (3) Fantini (1974) discussing aspects of the alternatives movement nationwide.

Works such as the three outlined above have indicated two directions for future evaluation efforts. First, substantively they have underscored a need to focus on the "quality of life" in alternative schools by arriving at adequate understandings of "where people are coming from"...students, teachers, and parents. Such understandings would minimally entail efforts to isolate underlying beliefs, attitudes, and values of participants in the educative process, particularly as they impinge upon what the participants define as "appropriate" behavior.

Second, methodological approaches are in need of development of "get at" perceptual orientations by a wide variety of approaches. These have variously included calls for informal and extended observations in alternative/open classrooms and schools, open-ended interviews, and an "immersion" in the life-cycle of the particular institution under the study (e.g., Carini et al., 1969; Burden, 1972; Bussis, Chittenden and Amarel, 1973; Shapiro, 1973; Morra, 1974).

Our approach has tried to build upon the concerns and approaches found in the literature reviewed above. We have emphasized those aspects of SEA which were subject to the control of the educational organization—community participation, governance and administration of a system of alternatives and the instructional environment of teachers and students. We have balanced traditional approaches and newer strategies of evaluation—standardized achievement scores and student perceptions—in assessing program effects on students. We have focused upon adult activities in the implementation of change as well as teacher and student behavior in different settings. And, we have included a focus upon changes over time.

Our overall strategy has been to de-emphasize those aspects of SEA which were a direct course of its status as a highly visible federal program with a considerable wealth of financial resources. By focusing upon a model for implementing alternative schools, we tried to maximize the value of our studies for practicing educators and to contribute to the literature on alternative schools.

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